THE New Republic

"If Adams Goes, Who Will Be President?"—TRB

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# Margaret Mead

## *A Conversation with Henry Brandon*

## The Republican Moment of Truth

*Ronnie Dugger on California Politics*

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## SUMMER BOOK NUMBER

Irving Howe  Donald Meyer  Conrad Brenner

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Percy Winner  Paula Snelling  R. W. Flint

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# Washington Wire

## *Innocence Abroad*

ALL THAT AFTERNOON reporters waited. Hagerty said there would be a statement at 4 but 4 passed. The tension rose; every opened door caused a nervous stir. The signal came at 4:37 and the crowd shoved into the White House press office. Hagerty was braced behind his desk, American flag behind him. With self-conscious casualness he began with the President's guest list. Then Hagerty's homely, attractive Irish face turned grim. "All right," he snapped, "the Governor has sent the following letter to Congressman Harris. It's on the way up now."

Reporters roughly grabbed copies and over this petty irritation some of Hagerty's strain peeped through. "Take your time!" he growled. Reporters skimmed the document, turned the page. Hand movie cameras chirped like crickets. Cameramen had climbed on rear tables; one held a floodlight—a huge, half-watermelon affair, focussed on the ceiling while he stood on a metal file cabinet. In no time mass heat overcame air-cooling. Hagerty stood defensively beside his flag, waiting as seconds ticked and reporters gulped the document in a room whose walls showed happy, familiar faces of Mrs. Eisenhower, the Nixons and the official family.

The Adams letter was stunning. Right down to this instant experienced reporters believed Adams must have left himself a way out. But this was an admission—he *had* taken favors; his defense was that his own intercessions were not favors in return.

That such a thing had happened was incredible. It was not a question of honesty: Adams is money honest. He is faithful to Eisenhower, bows daily with deep veneration to the established orthodoxy, the divine right of Business, and treats doubters with the contemptuous arrogance they deserve. All this is known. But something new was now revealed. The first hint came last autumn when Adams pooh-poohed Sputnik as a kind of Democratic "basketball" and tried to sneer it out of the skies. That seemed unbelievable. Now this new episode carried conviction. The man who had been running America was stupid. Only a provincial, a small-town yokel, a hick, could lack imagination enough to see the awful peril of his own exposed position, or sophistication enough to know about Caesar's wife.

## *"The Complete Facts"*

FOR THE MOMENT there was something more immediate. Reporters had waited five years for this. There was a bloodlust under the professional suavity. The cleavage between what Washington correspondents think about the Administration and what back-home publishers allow to be published has widened. Now at last unction had stubbed its toe. It was not a lovely sight, perhaps, but the pack was pushing in for the kill.

Hagerty was hammered with questions. He did a superb technical job. Controlling a hot temper, with no available weapon at hand save the conscious stance of moral rectitude (and that was dangerous too!), he kept control of himself. Questions rained like hail, it was important to pin down that Adams had really and truly accepted favors, that he would not see the press, and that he would probably claim executive privilege against a Congressional subpoena.

Yes, Hagerty gamely answered, the President still had full confidence in Adams. (This nailed Eisenhower into the case.) Well, how about later alibis —was this the whole story, Jim? "These are the complete facts in the case," said Hagerty.

Adams, said Hagerty, had regarded the shifting suites of expensive rooms in the Boston hotel where he accepted hospitality as Goldfine's "permanent apartment in downtown Boston." (Reporters gasped their incredulity.) Was there a distinction, Jim, between these favors and those denounced under Truman? Certainly, said Hagerty. What distinction? "If you don't know the difference, I do," said Hagerty lamely.

There were unspoken questions. Would Adams quit? (One reporter, at least, thought he would and would do it fairly promptly, though Democrats would probably prefer him to stay.) How soon before Nixon would deftly flick his skirt away from the contaminated Adams? (Ah, not long probably! Nixon is already suffering far more than anyone will admit from the debacle of the California primaries; he is now likely to accelerate his disassociation from the flagging Administration.) Another unspoken question—Will this drive the ailing Eisenhower still further into his golf escapism? (Nobody can answer that, yet it affects us most of all! If Adams goes who will then be President?)

And so, at 5:10 P.M. Thursday, August 12, out of the sweating room and its walls lined with happy pictures and its press secretary mopping his genial face before the American flag, we emerged from the conference leaving behind a cracked moral foundation. . . .

## *Concessions for de Gaulle*

MAKE NO DOUBT of it, the big news story is still France. France faces a fiscal crisis within 60 days. Should we support de Gaulle? Put it this way, if de Gaulle fails it will be a greater disaster than if he succeeds. A very experienced observer here likens France to a woman at a banquet who has dropped a squab into her lap and is semi-hysterical. The best thing for the gentlemen on either side of her to do (Britain, US) is to look the other way and pray the waiters will handle the affair, knowing that the slightest offer of assistance on their part will make them the target of psychopathic rage. De Gaulle's chances are touch-and-go, but for success sooner or later he must almost certainly demand concessions. He must assert his authority and restore French self-respect. What concessions? It doesn't really matter, but concessions from Germany, Britain, yes, the US. Particularly the US. Even at the best these demands are apt to seem outrageous. Yet as with a wife with whom a man can't live, or live without, France must be placated. There is unthinkable danger if she collapses.

**T.R.B.**

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# A Communication

► *Decline of the Humanities*

SIRS:

MY immediate reaction to Karl Shapiro's "Why Out-Russia Russia?" (*NR*, June 9) was that it must be a parody: I had never before seen assembled in so small a space so many of the arrogant, ill-informed, and inconsistent gripes against "science" that have

*(Continued on page 31)*

# Re-Appraisal—IV

## *A Policy for Europe*

THE ULTIMATE TEST of the West's capacity to recapture the initiative in the political struggle with the Soviet bloc, and to end the situation in which we are driven helplessly from one corner of the world after another, is what we can do about Central and Eastern Europe. There, nations subjected to Communist rule by Soviet force and against their clearly expressed will have shown repeatedly that they remain unalterably opposed to the system that governs them. If we have no policy for helping them, it means that we have no policy at all. Those who despair of ever giving real and serious meaning to the much-abused slogan of "Liberation" are, whether they know it or not, in the last analysis resigned to the fact that our resistance to totalitarian encroachments is merely a long drawn-out delaying action without hope of ever recovering lost ground.

We believe that "disengagement" can become such a strategy for peaceful liberation. By this we mean the agreed, total evacuation of at least the whole of Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary by the nuclear powers; the barring of these countries from any military alliances and from nuclear armaments, to be enforced by international inspection; the recognition of their full sovereignty in all other respects, including both the right to determine their internal regimes and to conclude non-military agreements with other nations; and a guarantee of this "neutral belt" which would make any violation of the neutral territories by the forces of either side, under any pretext (including a request for help against internal opponents by one of the governments concerned), a clear *casus belli*. While such an agreement would have to be carried out in stages, it would have to be negotiated as a package.

The principal objections raised against a policy of disengagement in this meaning of the term (and many of the current objections apply only to ideas of disengagement which are less precisely defined) ultimately reduce themselves to two: One is that with American forces once gone from Germany, and possibly from the continent of Europe, the American guarantee of the neutral area would become worthless. It is argued that neither the Europeans concerned nor the Soviets would believe in American willingness to risk nuclear world war for the sake of defending, say, Polish neutrality, once no American forces on the spot were directly involved in a Soviet attack. We would be abandoning, so it is said, the Germans and forcing them to negotiate a "deal" with the Russians. The other objection is that the Soviet Government could not possibly agree to a withdrawal from Eastern Europe without right of return, because this would involve the fall of a series of Communist regimes which, even if compensated from a military point of view by our own withdrawal, would be intolerable to the Communist rulers of Russia; for it would mean their losing both ideological face and the more material advantages of their present privileged position. We may sum up the essence of both objections by saying that the

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Russians either could not be induced to sign such an agreement, or could not be forced to keep it.

To the first objection, based on considerations of Western security, the basic answer is that disengagement will only work if it does *not* mean exclusive reliance on thermonuclear retaliation for Western defense. As far as the US guarantee is concerned, this means that we could not be content after disengagement only to keep bombers and bases this side of the Atlantic (thus retreating behind a "Fortress America," protected by a Strategic Air Command) but would need a ready "fire brigade" of paratroops for immediate action, based probably on Britain. It need not be as large as our present ground forces in Germany but would demonstrate to the Russians the risk of American troops getting involved in any serious violation of the "neutral belt." Moreover, we suggest that disengagement would greatly increase the willingness of the Europeans to maintain conventional military forces now so lacking. Nobody who has followed the defense debate in Western Germany can doubt that much of the opposition to national defense would disappear once German unification and "denuclearization" had been achieved; while France would hardly have been as reckless in transferring her forces to Algeria had there been no American divisions on the Rhine. But above all, the recovery of independence by the nations of Eastern Europe would mean that their forces, too, would have to be counted as potential opponents of a Russian military comeback.

If the two frontiers of the "neutral belt" took the place of the Yalta demarcation line—and this is the essence of any agreement to restore the independence of Europe by disengagement—it does not seem to us that the Russians would gamble on the *chance* of American inaction in the face of a violation that led to serious fighting: they would have to be *sure* of our staying aloof, despite our solemn guarantee, despite local resistance, despite the presence of an American fire brigade on the edge of Europe, despite our contrary response in Korea—and that they could not be. True, the Russians have broken every agreement conceived in terms of "democracy," "free elections," etc.; but they have carefully kept to the Yalta agreements on the military line of demarcation across Europe, knowing that its violation might touch off a world war.

But, some will certainly argue, what you have said only amounts to saying that no Soviet statesman could agree to disengagement along the lines here proposed unless he is resigned in advance to the possible loss of Communist control over Central and Eastern Europe; the Soviets would be bound to reject such a disengagement scheme for reasons of national prestige and ideology! That, indeed, we believe would be true at first; but we also believe that our position in putting forward such a demand would be so strong that the Soviets would eventually have to yield to the combined pressure of the enslaved peoples, of world opinion and of the West, however much they may dislike it—just as hitherto we have had to yield to their political pressure in many instances. In other words, far from regarding "disengagement" as the magic formula that will ensure quick agreement at a Summit conference, we see it as an objective whose final attainment may reward us and our allies only after a long and persistent struggle, and which may give to that struggle the positive meaning which it now lacks—the hopeful prospect of a Europe of independent, democratic states.



Even now, the Soviet leaders, whatever they may say, are worried about the persistent opposition of the satellite peoples and the independent ambitions of some of the satellite Communists. A serious Western offer of disengagement would revive the hope of freedom throughout Eastern Europe, and by that would immensely strengthen the opposition to alien Soviet control which our paralysis at the time of the Hungarian revolution so discouraged; it would deprive the Soviets of their one official pretext for maintaining troops in Eastern and Central Europe, yet would force them to increase these troops if they wish to remain at all, so as to be sure to keep discontent in check. Today, we have evidence that the Soviets wish to *reduce* their garrisons abroad because of their domestic need for manpower—not to disengage, but to "thin out." Should we not, then, put them in a position where they can no longer "thin out" but would in fact have to commit further forces unless they agreed to disengage altogether? And as an added pressure on the USSR for an agreement, could we not make legitimate use of the genuine Soviet fear of nuclear arms in German hands?

As we pointed out last week, one urgent issue on which we should try to reach immediate East-West agreement is the limitation of the circle of nuclear powers. But we should be bound to point out at the same time that while the great nuclear powers—the US, UK and USSR—retain forces in Germany, these powers will inevitably keep all their weapons in readiness, and that it will be impossible in the long run to exclude any frontline forces of our allies from training in their use. We might agree to postpone such nuclear training for German forces while negotiations on disengagement are offering a fair prospect of success; yet in the long run, there is an inescapable link between the closing of the "nuclear club" and the success of disengagement on which the Russians will have to reflect.

Finally, by concentrating on military withdrawal under guarantees without insisting on formal conditions about "free elections," which the Russians describe as "interference in internal affairs," we should gain the support of a large body of neutral opinion which now views the rigid Cold War posture of the US with such distaste and suspicion. The Russians are fully aware that, even if

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there are no agreements on free elections, some of the satellite regimes would be untenable if Soviet forces withdrew for good. Once the Russians find the pressure in Eastern Europe getting too strong, they may themselves begin to take the initiative to modify the character of these satellite regimes, so as to give themselves a chance to negotiate a withdrawal without risking a violent revolution which would inflict a heavy blow on Soviet prestige and might result in bitterly hostile governments on the Soviet border. Once that Soviet realization comes about, we should certainly help them to smooth the transition and to save face: we are interested in Soviet withdrawal and in the peaceful evolution of the European nations—we are not interested in a violent upheaval or in the inclusion of Eastern Europe in an anti-Soviet bloc. The point of the policy outlined here is to persuade the Soviets, by pressure *and* guarantees, that in the long run they will be more secure once their neighbors are independent neutrals instead of unwilling satellites.

To hold out such hopes from the West's present position of comparative weakness may seem to some readers like wishful dreaming; and we should be the first to agree that no such reversal in the situation can be miraculously achieved overnight by any new policy, and without patient effort and a much greater comprehension of world realities than one now finds either in the White House or on Capitol Hill. Nevertheless, the material and intellectual resources for that effort exist in the Western alliance; what has been sorely lacking is the inspiration of imaginative leadership and the moral force and cohesion that spring from the will to reach clearly conceived, worthwhile goals in a foreseeable time. If there is magic in the slogan of disengagement, it is that it stands for a road to such a goal.

# *De Gaulle—Bringing the Junta to Heel*

IT WAS clear from the beginning that if General de Gaulle was to stay in power he would need quickly to find a way of getting rid of those extremist civilian members of the All-Algerian Committee of Public Safety whom Machiavelli might have called "the sons of Brutus"—the enemies of a free state. On June 10, only days after de Gaulle had moved into the Hotel Matignon, they sent him an ultimatum, using almost the same old jargon of Pétain's—family, work and patrie. De Gaulle's immediate response was to summon their leader, Jacques Soustelle, to Paris and to speed up the process of making the army the "regular authority" in full administrative control in Algeria.

As de Gaulle's delegate, General Salan moved into Robert Lacoste's old offices in Government House in Algiers. The 63 civilian members of the All-Algerian Committee of Public Safety were not asked to move out of their offices in the same building—at least not yet—but all the normally civilian jobs were given to soldiers or held open for soldiers. Instead of transferring General Massu or punishing him for insubordination, it was understood that de Gaulle would add to his duties those of the job of Prefect of Algiers.

By thus driving a wedge between top civilians and top soldiers in Algeria, de Gaulle was of course taking a chance. But chances had to be taken and he was no doubt convinced that the generals in Algeria and in France greatly prefer him personally to any civilian alternative in Paris that might be prepared by Georges Bidault, Soustelle, and André Morice.

The second step by which de Gaulle succeeded in lowering the general temperature was his first radio-television appearance. Borrowing both from Franklin D. Roosevelt and Pierre Mendès-France, he called on the French people to give him 100 days. He promised that by the beginning of the autumn they would have the democratic chance to accept or reject freely at the polls his blueprint for a Fifth French Republic. It was a skillful performance. To those who reproached him for having accepted support from the men who, in the words of Mendès-France, "intend to install fascist-dictatorship," he said that the crisis of the regime "in any case had to break out." He paid personal tribute to the political leaders of the Fourth Republic but said they had been divorced from "the general interest." He made clear that it was not "the system" as such that he wants to change but the encroachments of Parliament. On the two touchiest subjects he was eloquently ambiguous: Algeria would be forever "with" France, whatever the word "with" may mean in practical terms; and France, although *of* the Western World, is not *confined* to it.

HE ASKED FRENCHMEN to buy Antoine Pinay's gold-supported bonds as a proof of confidence, and since many Frenchmen with money to buy bonds have confidence in Pinay and in gold, it was an excellent rhetorical invectorate. He praised the army and made a number of sound comments on the right of Frenchmen to be optimistic, *if* France has a strong state. But the time which the would-be creator of the Fifth Republic needs can be provided only by the army. France remains a military dictatorship; and its future is anything but clear.

PERCY WINNER

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# Different, Very Different

WASHINGTON lawyers are having a fascinating time challenging each other to distinguish the case of Sherman Adams from the "mink coat and deep-freeze" cases in the Truman era. When correspondents asked the Presidential Press Secretary if, in his non-legal opinion, the incidents were not similar, Mr. Hagerty said no, the Adams case was quite different.

Technically, Mr. Hagerty is quite correct. Mr. Adams' case is distinctly different from that of, say, the unlucky Donald Dawson, who also allowed his hotel bills to be paid while he was in service at the White House under Harry Truman.

For one thing, Mr. Adams is a much more important person than Dawson was. Mr. Adams is to President Eisenhower rather more than Louis Howe was to President Roosevelt, or Joe Tumulty to President Wilson. Dawson was merely a White House personnel officer with no policy-making authority. He had never been a Governor of New Hampshire, nor elected to anything.

For another thing, the hotel bill that Dawson allowed to be paid by a friend amounted, if memory serves, to a few hundred dollars for three short stays at the Miami Saxony. Mr. Adams' bill ran to as yet unknown thousands, a considerable difference. Nor was it alleged that the payment of Dawson's hotel bill involved any criminality. It was merely asserted that his conduct was cheap and unbecoming. Therein the cases are similar.

In a third sense, the difference goes deeper. Sunday papers quoted Sen. Glenn Beall (R, Md.) as saying that unless Mr. Sherman Adams can offer a better explanation than that in his letter to Representative Harris he should resign "or be removed from office." Isn't the Senator being unfair? Only President Eisenhower can remove Mr. Adams. Yet in permitting a wool manufacturer to pick up his $2,000 hotel tab, Mr. Adams was only *imitating what Mr. Eisenhower did in permitting the* Maine Chance beauty parlor in Arizona to pick up Mrs. Eisenhower's tab for, it was reported at the time, more than $2,000. Or in accepting such substantial gifts for his farm that it is said the gate at Gettysburg has had to be widened to bring them in.

It is pretty rough to penalize a man for doing what the boss does.

**SUMMER SCHEDULE**

DURING *July and August* **The New Republic** *will appear every other week, instead of weekly. Issues will be dated July 7, July 21, August 4, and August 18. Weekly publication will be resumed September 1.*

"The advertising sounded great"

# Regulating Labor

THERE are reasons why both labor and management are less interested in the Senate's consideration of labor legislation than all the hustling in the corridor would indicate. Lobbyists from both sides have been practically tripping over one another in the Capitol, watching every see-saw step of the debate over the Kennedy-Ives union reform bill. But both sides are convinced that the House is unlikely to pass a labor bill this year. (Conscientious members feel it is too late in the session to do more than rubber-stamp the Senate bill now, and many cautious ones prefer to side-step the issue in an election year.) The Senate battle thus becomes a preliminary to the real bout next year.

Moreover, for all the restrictive amendments that have been tossed about in debate, management experts remain unenthusiastic about the whole focus of the discussion. To them, all this talk about welfare fund disclosure, enforcement of internal democracy and the like are largely irrelevant. Management is more interested in outlawing the union shop (the purpose of "right to work" legislation) than in democratizing union practices, more interested in prohibiting national industry-wide bargaining or emasculating the secondary boycott than in purifying welfare and pension funds.

It is with this wider danger in mind that the industrial Union Department of AFL-CIO is staging a big-name

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talkathon at the Commodore Hotel in New York this week devoted to drowning verbally the proponents of "right to work" legislation. One of the main speakers is Walter Reuther, and it substantiates our thesis to note that for the first time in more than a decade his United Auto Workers are operating without a union shop agreement in the auto plants: The auto companies have agreed to maintain contract conditions in the shops during the current contract-less period. Their sole exceptions were the provisions calling for a union shop and dues check-off; auto workers can now drop out of their union or refuse to pay dues without losing their jobs. Labor views this as a probing foray by management intended to test the strength of the union on the assembly line.

*This situation in auto is only part of the larger pattern.* It highlights an aspect of the California political scene which many commentators have overlooked: While Sen. William Knowland suffered a humiliating defeat in the recent gubernatorial primary, business organizations are boasting that they have already collected more than enough signatures to guarantee that the "right to work" issue will be on the ballot next fall. The test of their optimism will come on June 26, when their 322,000 signatures must be filed with the state. They insist they have a fighting chance to ram the law through in California and an even better chance in Ohio. Both are key industrial states and will provide important tests of labor's political strength. Until now the only states to have adopted "right to work" laws are the least industrialized states (with the exception of Indiana).

Should the "right to work" campaigns succeed either in California or in Ohio, it would be a defeat for organized labor that would inevitably loose new campaigns elsewhere. For the net result of outlawing the union shop is not so much to "rescue" the individual worker from "compulsory unionism" as to irritate the established relationships in thousands of plants across the nation where the union shop is almost a tradition. Banning the union shop would be notification to unions that they must once again put on the brass knuckles and slug to survive.

# Southern Strategy

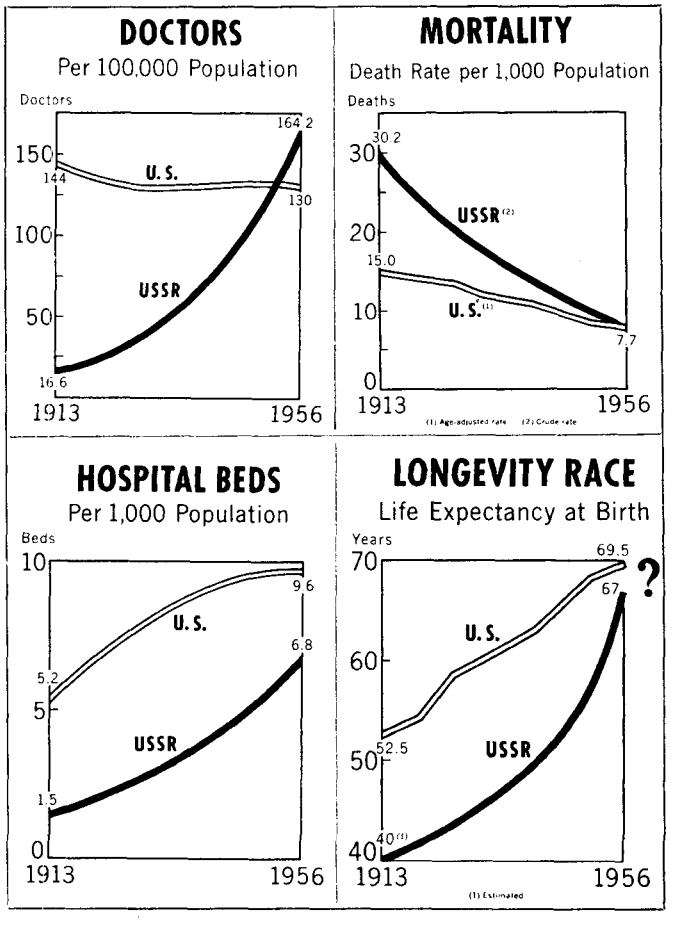
THOSE INVENTIVE extremists among the Southern Democrats who gave us the Dixiecrat and State's Rights movements of 1948 and the Democrats-for-Eisenhower in 1952 and 1956 plan a different approach in 1960. This time they will work from within the Democratic Party with the Constitution as their secret weapon.

Most of us forget between elections that although there have been more than 200 attempts to modernize our method of electing Presidents since the electoral college system was adopted, we still operate under laws which do not bind the electors to vote for the candidates of their party's choice. Legally electors are free to vote for whomever they choose. By revising state laws where necessary to give a few party leaders the power to pick the electors and specifically freeing the electors from any obligation to vote for the national party nominee after the election, the ultra-conservatives hope to control enough electoral votes to prevent either party from winning a majority if the next election is close.

Alabama, South Carolina and recently Georgia—(with a total of 31 electoral votes)—have already taken these legal steps. There will be no immediate rush of neighboring states to follow suit—for most of them have more enlightened elected leaders. But more Little Rock incidents and the 1959 elections could quickly change that.

# Medical Lag

SOME astringent remarks were made by the president of the Merck Pharmaceutical Company, John T. O'Connor, to the Manufacturing Chemists' Association on recent advances in Soviet treatment of disease. Mr. O'Connor reminds us that the Soviet Union graduates twice as many doctors annually as the US; that the number of hospital beds per thousand of population, though not yet equal to this country, is rising rapidly; and that preventive medicine in the USSR is given as much rank as healing. As a result, life expectancy in Russia is rising,

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now assembling medical manpower for export to less-developed countries.

We do still have a major advantage in the complex American pharmaceutical industry (the Soviet Union has been copying rather than developing modern wonder drugs), but at the present rate we are not going to have available the extra man-power for highly valued medical missions that should be part of US technical assistance.

Mr. O'Connor's prescription for remedying the lag is sensible but would require considerably greater private and public outlays for medicine than are likely in the next few years. He suggests that the US:

- Expand medical research.
- Train more doctors.
- Set up a new foreign medical-aid program.
- Raise the standard of living and health of underprivileged groups in the US.
- Coordinate the various attacks on the process of aging, heart disease and cancer.
- Make preventive medicine an equal partner with the curing of disease.

# Tuning in the Public

REP. JAMES ROOSEVELT (D, Cal.) has asked FCC Chairman John Doerfer a question to which we are eager to hear the answer: Does the FCC make any systematic check on the programming of the 3,000 radio stations throughout the country today—and specifically, is this record reviewed when the time for license renewal comes up every three years?

Mr. Roosevelt's curiosity was aroused by the fact that in a recent FCC check on 10 Atlanta radio stations, only four passed the test of whether they had abided by the seven basic criteria for good programming; the other six failed and had their licenses revoked. "If 60 percent of the commercial radio operators in Atlanta failed to pass the test," Mr. Roosevelt wrote to Mr. Doerfer, "it would certainly seem to raise a doubt as to whether a majority of the other stations of the nation were conforming to the seven basic criteria of the FCC."

"I suppose it is more expensive to operate a rounded program than just to play records for a 24-hour period," Mr. Roosevelt grants. However, he points out, "the FCC has a special obligation first to enforce the responsibilities that a broadcaster assumes when be obtains his license to operate and secondly, . . . [to] point out that he may make the same kind of arrangements as are made for independent newspapers for the use of topflight and expensive talent at minimum cost."

Does the FCC believe that it now has the authority to enforce a high standard of programming, Mr. Roosevelt wants to know? And if not, what legislation does it need to give listeners to our 120 million radio sets an occasional change in diet from rock 'n roll and commercials?

# American Culture In Search of Angels

## *Tight-Fisted Government*

IN MOST COUNTRIES, support of the creative arts has long been a normal item in the national budget. Emperors, kings, czars and popes were among the greatest of art patrons; court and cathedral were the marketplace for culture. And when republican institutions introduced accountability for finances, state budgets continued to maintain the major artistic ventures begun under royal patronage, from ballet in Moscow to theatre, opera, symphony in Paris, Milan, Berlin, London.

Not so in these United States. Twice only have federal budgets included cultural expenditures of real size, and both times the appropriations were undertaken with other objectives in view rather than that of the advancement of culture. (The present Congress, we should record, may make history by authorizing the building of a National Capital Center of the Performing Arts with federal funds.)

During the depression of the mid-thirties, the broad range of WPA projects included art, writing, theatre, but their primary purpose was to prevent starvation and when the depression ended they ended too.

Likewise, present federal subventions to extend the overseas presentation of American culture are voted as part of the Cold War competition for men's minds. In 1954, the Arts, Foundations and Commissions Subcommittee of the House Education and Welfare Committee, after hearings in which federal aid for the fine arts had been urged by numerous witnesses, declined to recommend any of the proposed bills because "we do not believe this is a proper area for the expenditure of federal funds."

☆

But the same Congress made provisions for a $5 million emergency fund for the use of the President "to meet extraordinary and unusual circumstances arising in the international affairs of the government," with the understanding that part would be used to expand the overseas itineraries of American performing artists. That is how *Porgy and Bess* was enabled to follow its Moscow run with appearances in Yugoslavia, Greece, Israel, Egypt and Spain; how the Philadelphia orchestra is currently touring Eastern Europe; how the New York Philharmonic has just played—without a rock thrown—in Peru; how the New York City and San Francisco ballet groups are scheduled for Asia during the present season.

But here at home, while the American National Theatre and Academy (ANTA), instituted during the

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first of these federal excursions into the arts and currently serving as arbiter of excellence among practitioners of the performing arts for export, has the dignity of a federal charter, it doesn't get a nickel of federal money. Domestically, federal funds are almost entirely limited to repositories of culture—archeological finds and military relics in the National Parks, at West Point and Annapolis; exhibits of the Atomic Energy Commission. In Washington, where the federal government also serves as a municipal authority, an $8¾ million operating budget for the National Gallery of Arts and the Smithsonian Institution works out at about 5¾ cents per capita for the nation—but it is worth noting that without their original private individual donors, Andrew Mellon and James Smithson, these two institutions might have been a long time starting.

In the states, a similar reticence in cultural appropriations is noticeable: with such exceptions as North Carolina's State Symphony and Virginia's Barter Theatre, most effort is also concentrated in the museum field. Across the country more than 100 state-administered museums have annual budgets ranging from the price of a janitor to a top of nearly half a million. A number of these (Illinois, Virginia, Nevada) have museum-mobiles which carry exhibits to areas away from the capital; others (Washington, New Jersey, Florida) circulate them in packages through schools and organizations; a few (Ohio, Illinois, New York) have their own publications and carry on research.

But the main sources of tax funds for contemporary culture are the budgets of the municipalities. Beginning in the 1920's, permissive state legislation encouraged use of tax funds by cities and metropolitan counties for such purposes; tax funds have since provided auditoriums—more than 400 of them—museums, orchestral shells and other physical facilities, and additional funds are increasingly available to support the performers who fill them. In the majority of cases, however, the funds voted by the city fathers form part of a combined public-and-private initiative, with the spearhead furnished by citizens rather than officials.

Private contributors to culture in Middletown may be divided into three groups: One is composed of knowledgeable and still relatively wealthy citizens who in the days before income tax would have been the chief patrons of the arts. They still set the tone. Many a metropolitan museum is formed with one or more formerly private collection as its nucleus. Any fine arts commission is sure to include local *gens tres biens* whose familiarity with art is recognized and whose taste for art is considered reliable.

Another component of private donors is the civic-minded individuals who may not themselves be specialists in art appreciation, but who think it is a good thing for Middletown to show signs of culture. They are the ones who work hard raising money for the municipal symphony, or staff the combined drive for cultural objectives—comparable to the Community Chest or United Givers Funds for welfare activities—through which in increasing numbers (now about 50) metropolitan areas are meeting their needs. (In Cincinnati, whose first united drive a decade ago raised the total take by about $50,000, the yield has risen from $250,000 to $325,000 over 10 years.)

A third contributing group comprises the business interests of the area, newly aware of a dollars-and-cents advantage in cultural activities. The advantage may be of several sorts: An attractive community of varied interests is a fringe benefit which enables firms to hold promising executives in place and compensate for New York's cultural fleshpots in the eyes of their wives. Festivals and special performances, by attracting out-of-town crowds, bring additional revenue to hotels, restaurants, department stores. A civic center, replacing a blighted area at the core of a big metropolis, can give the central city a new reason for being, and draw back in, for an evening in and on the town, otherwise sedentary suburbanites.

☆

New York City's proposed Lincoln Center near Columbus Circle is by far the most ambitious venture in the arts yet to be made by an American metropolis. Plans call for raising $75 million, part to be spent on buildings, part for scholarships, part as subventions to previously untried productions. The City's share takes the form of a positive effort to counter urban decay: the land on which the Center will be built has been condemned by the City of New York and sold at a loss for $4 million to a specially-formed non-profit corporation that will operate the Center.

Because of the dilapidated condition of the area, two-thirds of the difference between the cost of the condemned land to the city and the sale price to the Center will be made up from federal funds under the national slum clearance program; the other third will be absorbed by the City budget. Three large foundations have given an initial $15.5 million. With this backlog, work has been begun on the first of a planned group of 11 buildings, a 2,800 seat auditorium which will replace Carnegie Hall for the New York Philharmonic; it is expected to be complete by 1960. Other parts of the Center will house the Metropolitan Opera, dance groups, drama (in the first new theatre to be built in New York in many years); the Juilliard School of Music will relocate there.

Ten percent of the eventual total, $7.5 million, is now being sought from New York businesses, on the grounds that when completed the Center will draw a quarter of a million visitors to New York, in addition to making a show-place of a now blighted area.

HELEN HILL MILLER

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# *The Superficial Aspect*

## Neo-Know-Nothingism

CHARLES DE GAULLE apparently regards himself, and is regarded by many Frenchmen, as an avatar of some sort, but of what? Possibly of Jeanne d'Arc, but possibly of Boulanger, or of Plon-Plon, that Bonaparte who was more absurd even than Napoleon the Little.

But that is French opinion. As for Americans, we are not saying. For the first 10 days after the sudden resurgence of de Gaulle, comment in this country was as feeble as can well be imagined. The President said that General de Gaulle, personally, is quite a nice fellow. The leader of the opposition said we must stand ready to assist France. The rest said yak-yak. One is tempted to assert that the over-all effect of American comment was a subtraction from the sum total of human knowledge.

And this is the country that is, by the inexorable decree of circumstance, the leader of the Western democracies! The situation is a stern challenge of our competence to lead anything, and if our guardian angel helps us pull out of it with any shreds of reputation left, it behooves us to fall to the most intensely concentrated kind of study. For France is close to us, historically, politically and culturally; if, then, we cannot understand France, what earthly chance have we of understanding the Chinese Communists, or the Russians, or the Yugoslavs?

What we are doing about it, though, is hardly impressive. The launching of the first Sputnik was a jolt that set us to screaming for a reformation of our educational system. Orators have made tremendous play with the fact that Russia this year is qualifying 26,000 engineers against our much smaller number, and the air is full of schemes for ramming boys into the technical schools and, presumably, ramming them through.

But would 52,000 engineers have enabled us to understand de Gaulle? Not unless he is an engineering problem, which some of us presume to doubt. To figure out de Gaulle, knowledge of French history, political, social and economic, is a better instrument than the differential calculus. The religion and language of France do far more to explain him than the theory of wave mechanics. Yet the young American who proposes to spend years of heavy toil making himself a first-rate authority on French culture is choosing a very doubtful career. That sort of thing will not help him to meet a payroll or launch a Sputnik. The fact that if he really mastered his subject he could give us advice that might save us from mistakes that cost billions is given small attention.

As for the young man who aspires to become an authority on Chinese or Russian culture, let him consider carefully and prayerfully what happened to Owen Lattimore and Edward U. Condon. The latter, indeed, was interested only incidentally in the whole field of Russian culture; he concentrated on Russian science, but for that he suffered the fate of those who cast their pearls before swine. They turned upon and rent him.

Nevertheless, anyone who reads attentively the weird confession of faith of Ivan Karamazov, written in 1880, will gain more light on the mentality of Nikita Khrushchev than he can from all the week's press dispatches out of Moscow. When you know how a man thinks, you can guess pretty accurately how he is going to act and, if necessary, checkmate him before he starts. What is quite as important, you will know when it is not necessary to checkmate him, whereby you save both money and good-will.

A couple of thousand high-powered eggheads, each of whom had put in 20 years of intensive study, half of them on Russian, the other half on Chinese culture, if they were spotted around, some in the State Department, others in college classrooms and on editorial tripods, would be worth more than 20 divisions at checking the advance of Communists, because they could tell us how to trip it up.

BUT IF you wish to estimate our chances of getting them, consider this: in Baltimore City last week the local Bar Association invited the Russian ambassador to make an address explaining certain peculiarities of the Russian legal system that puzzle American lawyers; and the Police Commissioner had to assign 150 men to protect the guest. The first threat was uttered, not by embittered refugees, nor by the plug-uglies of the slums, but by practicing attorneys, officers of the courts, who promised to create a disturbance if the ambassador were allowed to speak. Educated men acted for all the world like the Venezuelan riff-raff when Nixon appeared!

Joe McCarthy is dead, but his soul goes marching on. The idea that to know means to embrace, therefore that knowledge of the enemy is treason to the nation is a greater American weakness than any reduction of the armed forces. We cannot survive on the theory that we must at all costs keep ahead of the Russians, and if it happens that the Russians are going rapidly to hell, we must beat them to it. But that is the essence of scientific education lacking the balance of the humanities.

GERALD W. JOHNSON

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# Politics in California-III

## *The Republican Moment of Truth*

by RONNIE DUGGER

As THEIR state chairman says, the Republicans in California are facing their moment of truth. Alarmed by the Democratic sweep in the June 3 primary, Vice President Nixon, GOP officials of varying heft and profundity, and possibly even President Eisenhower will troop up and down the Golden State between now and November, trying to rescue ungainly Bill Knowland from the wrath of the voters. But most of the 1960 Democratic Hopefuls will also be pitching in for the party in California. And the fledgling Democratic Council of Clubs, now emphatically proved important by their triumphs in the primaries, will be challenged to produce for their nominees in the general election as they have not produced before.

To the distress of Republicans, in fact, little in California politics this summer seems as it was before. "Liberal, but moderate liberal" Democrat Pat Brown in his campaign for Governor has divided the usually monolithic daily press and has on his side many respectable businessmen and Republicans who can afford to contribute generously. Knowland has a united organized labor opposed to him for Governor, and for the first time in many years, the unions have not endorsed a single major Republican candidate, excepting the California Federation of Labor's double endorsement of Democrat Clair Engle and Republican Goody Knight for the US Senate. June primary results, too, indicate a new pattern of voting along semi-straight party lines—strange to California.

In a state 800 miles long, with a highly mobile population difficult to interest in politics, campaign expenses are sky-high. The cost of electing all California public officials in 1956, for example, has been estimated at $10 million; a single strong state-wide race costs at least $400,000. This being so, in the absence of a strong Democratic Party, business interests, being the most affluent, have been able to dominate the state. At the capital in Sacramento, their lobbies have become prolific and potent. In 1955-56, 414 of them registered as representatives of 377 interests (including, however, the Dog Defenders League, Dancing Masters of California and the Western Nudist Conference).

No single group, not even oil, seems to be in control. (Although the major oil companies with foreign production admittedly sank $5 million into the campaign, they lost a public vote in 1956 to establish the price-fixing variety of oil conservation which is a duly sacrosanct statute in Texas and other oil states.) But John Despol, secretary of the state CIO Council, believes oil, trucking, railroads, liquor and the manufacturers' association are the most influential lobbies in Sacramento. They constitute an "interest matrix," he says, but "each one is sufficiently powerful to itself to operate on its own." A University of California doctoral dissertation adds Despol's own labor lobby to this list of the "most influential" at Sacramento.

The "interest matrix" is naturally interested in elections as well as lobbying. So much depends on their campaign support, in fact, that "A Republican who is cut off at the pockets is out of luck," says Ed Lybeck of Rep. James Roosevelt's staff. "The Knight episode demonstrates the type of setup the Republicans have. They control the newspapers and they have the money." Glenn Anderson, the strong-minded liberal who won the Democrats' nomination for lieutenant-governor, says simply that in Southern California "the *Los Angeles Times* is it," while up north it's Pacific Gas and Electric and the Knowlands.

Because of the non-partisan tradition and the transience of many Californians, the press has had an unusually persuasive voice in Republican counsels. (Democratic Senate nominee Clair Engle says "The Republican press and money . . . can make a four-minute miler out of a political corpse.") And with four out of every 10 voters in California, Los Angeles does not have a single pro-Democratic newspaper. The *Times*, with a daily circulation of half a million and 865,000 on Sundays, endorsed 14 of Los Angeles' 15 city councilmen; "They have a terrific control," says one of the council members.

Actually, however, the paper is but the visible tip of a business iceberg—land, lumber, banking, insurance, television, steel, aluminum, oil, printing, and nobody is quite sure what else. It is less a newspaper than a holding company for Publisher Chandler and his associates. Neal Haggerty, boss of the California Federation of La-

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"Shake ol' Buddy—pardon the glove"

bor, says "The *Times* has an empire with every sort of business known to man—power companies, banks, retail, farming, investments." Fred Dutton, Brown's state campaign manager, says, "Four or five people—Brown has called them 'the Republican power elite'—run the thing. Norman and Mrs. Chandler; Asa Call, a prominent businessman; Kyle Palmer, political editor of the *Los Angeles Times* . . ." The Chandlers dominate the Los Angeles and Southern California economy, Dutton says.

Socially, too, the Chandlers reign. One night, a Los Angeleno who was present recalls, first-nighters at the Los Angeles Symphony noticed a bunting-draped stall overlooking the stage. They thought perhaps it was for the Vice President, but the Chandlers arrived, alone, and occupied the place.

The *Times* way of announcing a $100-a-plate dinner for Brown (attended, as it turned out, by 1,500 people) was to run a story that the Republican state chairman was warning union members friendly to Knowland they might be helping Brown's campaign for Governor by attending!

In the *Times* news columns one finds such remarks as these: "Senator Bridges also said Knowland is a hard but always fair and honorable fighter. Our Attorney General [Brown] will learn some of these facts for himself as the campaign progresses." When the *Times* announced a meeting of the Los Angeles Democratic Women for Knowland committee, the story started, "A group of Democratic women, impressed with US Senator Knowland's forthrightness. . . ."

Consider the news of April 30 in the *Times*—page one, a four-column picture of the Vice President and Mrs. Nixon in South America, with story; page 2, an interview with Knowland, and Cecil B. DeMille's speech supporting the right-to-work law; page 19, "Republican Chairman Sees Five Good Factors." In the issue of May 2, one found a long story on Nixon in Argentina (page 2), an economist praising the "Buy Now" campaign (page 4), a column commending Nixon's job on his Latin tour (page 8), a story quoting Representative Engle at a water hearing (page 10), a story quoting Knowland from Washington (page 11), a story on the opening of a new GOP campaign office, with a two-column picture (page 25), a six-column society front-page layout on a bus tour on behalf of Knowland taken by Mrs. Knowland and their daughters, and in the third section, a story on the main political event of the day, the $100 dinner for Brown at the Beverly Hilton in Los Angeles. Little wonder Vann Dempsey at Engle's headquarters says enviously of the *Times,* "Cheez, it's like sending out a leaflet every day."

Brown says Knight's finessing out of the Governor's race was accomplished by a woman, "a political boss" in Los Angeles, who told Knight he could get no funds to run for Governor. The Knowland-Knight switch is generally regarded as an accomplishment of Mr. and Mrs. Chandler of the *Times,* in whose offices Senate Republican Minority Leader William Knowland is called "our Willie." Some believe Knowland zeroed in on the right-to-work issue to embarrass pro-labor Knight and please the anti-union *Times,* but this also enables Brown to say with effect that he prefers "Back to Work" to "Right to Work." Knight, J. T. DeSilva of the Retail Clerks Union believes, infuriated "the economic barons . . . the Chandlers of the *Los Angeles Times* and the Knowlands of the *Oakland Tribune,*" by being friendly to labor; and so he was jettisoned. Jerd Sullivan, a rich and influential Republican, said the Knight-Knowland switch "seems to be an effort on the part of Norman Chandler to do whatever he wants to do."

WHEN Knight first announced for re-election as Governor, the four Hearst papers endorsed him; when, therefore, the *Times* pressured him out of the race, the Hearst papers were left embracing a shadow. It is said that young Hearst resents the smotheringly influential *Times,* a view which seems borne out by a column he wrote after the primary remarking that the "political geniuses" who had pressured Knight out of the Governor's race had been undone and wondering "if Norman Chandler still thinks it's a political crime for a popular governor to seek support among union labor."

The Hearst papers (the *San Francisco Examiner* and *Call-Bulletin,* the *Los Angeles Examiner* and *Herald &*

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*Express*) have been very friendly to Brown and came within a veto from the East of endorsing him. Warden Woolard, editor of the *Los Angeles Examiner,* was introduced at the testimonial dinner for Brown. The Scripps-Howard *San Francisco News* has endorsed Brown outright, and the three Democratic McClatchy *Bee* papers in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys (circulation about 200,000) have endorsed Brown and Engle. As Attorney General, in 1954, Brown was able to obtain the *Times* endorsement after threatening to run for Governor; so also this year he has escaped some of the sting the *Times* has inflicted on other Democrats.

ALTHOUGH confronted now by a coalition including public-power-minded and pro-labor Democratic clubs, unions and minorities, the Republicans have permitted the two main issues of the Brown-Knowland campaign to become a Democratic dam-and-power-plant program to use millions of tons of water now emptying into the ocean and the right-to-work law Knowland is promoting.

Most of California's water supply originates in Northern California. The Northern half of the state, which rules the Senate, wants to dam up its streams for flood control, water conservation and power. The more populous South, which rules the Assembly, wants a guarantee that it would get plenty of the water from the projects that would be built in large part with its tax money. This year's legislature adjourned without financing any dams because the North would not give the South such guarantees.

The federal government, meanwhile, has started a project on the Trinity River in the North to turn surplus water away from the Pacific, eastward to the Sacramento River so it can flow down and bring needed water to the Central Valley. Pacific Gas & Electric has proposed that it be allowed to take over the construction of powerhouses in the Trinity River project, and Knowland, saying he doesn't want California's Central Valley to become "another Tennessee Valley Authority," has sided with PG&E. Brown says the federal government, and not PG&E, should build the facilities and distribute the power. "I didn't think the Senator needed the extra money for his campaign for Governor that much," Brown said.

Knowland has worked hard not only at alienating public power partisans but also the state's 1.4 million union members. Opposing the union shop on grounds that a worker has a right to voluntary, not compulsory, unionism, he has asked if Americans should be compelled to stay in the Teamsters' Union as "captives" of Jimmy Hoffa. He does not, he says, intend to let California become "a satellite of Walter Reuther's labor-political empire." He insisted before the primary that he believed many rank-and-file union people would vote for him on the sly: he even spoke at the last state CIO convention in an effort to meet some of them. It was not a pleasant experience. A convention sergeant-at-arms tapped a member of his family on the shoulder and passed along the admonishment of the day, "No booing." During his speech ("In some respects, I understand how Daniel felt in the Lion's den . . .") no one shuffled feet, no one coughed; it was so quiet his voice echoed in the hall. When he finished there was cold silence—not even polite applause, not even a boo or two for comic relief. People there say he turned purple. When an official shook his hand and thanked him for coming, he mumbled something and left at once.

There is a meaning in the way AFL State Secretary Haggerty says that union people have "no choice but to vote for Pat. . . . There is just no other choice." Haggerty, though a registered Democrat originally from Boss Curley's Boston bailiwick, has backed many Republicans in the past, including Governor Knight. In his defense Haggerty can cite the bread-and-butter gains Knight helped the unions win, but there is no gainsaying that Haggerty suffered a serious defeat when the California Federation refused to unite behind Knight for Senator this year, instead co-endorsing Engle and Knight. Except for this race and one other, where two Democrats were endorsed, the AFL and CIO this year lined up for the California Democratic Council's state ticket.

Merger of the two labor organizations has not yet occurred in California, but George Meany recently announced in San Francisco that it would, on orders. The main issue is Haggerty's role as director of political action (he is not seriously challenged as the skillful lobbyist he is). Much will turn, Assemblyman Burton believes, on whether the voting strength of the unions in the merged federation is based on past per-capita paid affiliations with the state organizations, which would favor the CIO's almost totally-affiliated 150,000 members, or actual union membership, which would favor the much larger AFL. Haggerty frankly says that for 58 years the California AFL has had "one executive officer answerable to the executive council and convention, with all authority to hire help," and he wants this to be continued; but the CIO, favoring politics more democratic, does not.

Since Liberals have taken over the state Carpenters' Union and the Machinists are also said to have fallen into more liberal ways, and Haggerty's main supporters, the Teamsters, will not be in evidence, an anti-Haggerty coalition, if successful in the merged state AFL-CIO, might bring to an end California labor's tendency to back Republicans.

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RONNIE DUGGER'S *final report on his political tour of California for this journal will be an interview-study of Democratic gubernatorial candidate Edmund G. "Pat" Brown.*

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*A Conversation with*

*MARGARET MEAD*

# "A New Form of Escapism—Escape Into Private Life"

by HENRY BRANDON

BRANDON: I am interested in whether you as an anthropologist believe that American society or the American species is capable of world leadership. But to approach this question gradually I want to quote from an American writer: "American civilization is most sincerely dedicated to the isms of materialism, conformism, optimism, escapism and Momism." First, what about the materialistic nature of the American?

MEAD: Perhaps I might start by quoting the comments of the natives of New Guinea whom I went back to re-study in 1953—I had studied them before in 1928 when they were real Stone Age savages . . . and the most possessive, acquisitive, competitive, materialistic groups of savages that I had ever met. They were exposed, during World War II, to about a million Americans. They said:

> We learned from the Americans that material things don't matter, that the only thing in the world that matters is a single human being. You can spend any amount of material goods to save the life of a single human being—now we have learned this, we want to have the kind of society that is organized around human beings instead of around property and things.

If I quote this to an ordinary American audience, they have some idea of what I'm talking about, but if I quote it to the professional intelligentsia, they gasp with amazement. The natives added:

> The reason that Americans do not value material things too highly is because they have so many of them.

There's been a confusion between having many material things and being materialistic. Europeans feel that to prefer a bathtub to a garden is crass materialism. Americans don't set things up as between a bathtub and a garden, because a bathtub isn't a luxury in this country. It's a necessity. So, from what I have seen and the discussions I have had in Europe, I think Americans are much *less* materialistic than Europeans, much less.

BRANDON: Still, the American economy is built on persuading people to buy and buy more, so you have a concentration on acquiring material things.

MEAD: Well now, how would you characterize other economies? What are they based on—persuading people not to buy?

BRANDON: No, but the economy is not all that dependent on whether everybody will own a washing-machine or not.

MEAD: I know it isn't. And other countries have had rather serious production problems as a result, haven't they? Ours is an economy that is geared to a rising standard of living. We are all geared to a notion that we could live better than we do—so no one settles down very comfortably and is satisfied with the way he lives. Whereas, of course, in many parts of Europe there are class-type standards: if people reach them, they are contented and they don't want to go out to get more things.

BRANDON: Do you think conformism is an outstanding characteristic of the Americans?

MEAD: I think it's an outstanding characteristic of American life as looked at by Europeans. You see, they're not used to covering so much territory and finding anything that looks remotely like what was in another part of it; in a country of this size, which is after all under one government and has mass production of objects like drugstores and motorcars, how can you avoid apparent similarity?

BRANDON: When Europeans refer to conformism, they also think of intellectual conformism.

MEAD: We have one of the most diverse educational systems in the world—hundreds and hundreds of school systems that pay no attention to each other. In Europe, if you meet an educated man of your own class, you know what poetry

HER FELLOW ANTHROPOLOGISTS don't quite know how to take MARGARET MEAD'S journeys back and forth between conventional (and distinguished) field research among primitive peoples and most unacademic commentary on human relations in modern society. Miss Mead's many books and articles include *Growing Up in New Guinea* and *Male and Female*. She teaches at Columbia University and lives in a Greenwich Village house where HENRY BRANDON had this interview.

THIS IS THE FOURTH in a series of conversations tape-recorded originally for *The Sunday Times* of London by its Washington correspondent. Mr. Brandon's interviews with BEN SHAHN, FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT and others will appear exclusively in this country in coming issues of *The New Republic*.

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he's read, so it's safe to quote it. But in this country you never know. So the whole gentle art of allusion, which means so much in civilized relationships in Europe, is missing in this country.

**BRANDON:** Let's take optimism and escapism together. Do you think that is a characteristic quality of Americans?

**MEAD:** I think Americans are optimistic, on the whole, although they can also respond rather quickly to what they regard as "bad news"—this is usually characterized as hysteria. So when we responded with a terrific fuss over Sputnik it was very temporary—the minute we got a satellite up, people were likely to say: "Now we've won." I think we're fundamentally optimistic, yes.

The word "escapism" means to me wanting to go to the South Seas—things of that sort. But you could say there is a new form of escapism . . . and that is the escape into private life, which is so characteristic of the present age in this country and is also a characteristic of the Soviet Union: the escape into one's own little house and one's own garden and one's own children, and the small bit of life which one can make a success in; and the concentration upon it, the flight from larger issues.

**BRANDON:** What do you think is the reason for it?

**MEAD:** Partly the depression and war and the whole series of things that has happened in the last 20 years, with a pressure on younger people by older people who say: "Better get your happiness now, you can't tell what will happen." Also, a sense that the world's gotten so big and unmanageable that it's very hard for individuals to be able to influence it very much. Also a dread of disaster, because this country is conscious of the possibility of total destruction. It's almost as if they were trying to live a 50-year life within 10 or 15 years.

**BRANDON:** Wouldn't you expect, then, that people would have a special incentive for participating in politics and government?

**MEAD:** If they thought they could influence events, yes. But we are told also that, whatever we do, we alone cannot determine our own fate any more. That is a new experience for Americans.

**BRANDON:** You mentioned that the same is the case in Russia.

**MEAD:** Well, in Russia also, as nearly as we can tell—one always has to qualify—there is a great retreat to private life. The one association that is safe from criticism and from guilt by association is with one's own wife and children. So there seems to be also in Russia an increased emphasis on personal relations within the family group, and a shrinking away from involvement in other things.

**BRANDON:** It's often been said that there's a good deal of similarity between Americans and Russians.

**MEAD:** There are certain similar characteristics. Russian farmers and American farmers appear to have got on very well together. The sense of belonging to a big country, and a country that belongs to the future, that makes for a similar kind of a national identity. The fact is that both the Soviet Union and the United States have had the job of continually making over the next generation. What the Soviet Union did at first was to make over the children of peasants and other groups within the society; we had to take people who came to us from other societies. But in both cases this produces a kind of thinness of culture, and a commitment to the future rather than to the past.

**Margaret Mead**

**BRANDON:** Well, how about "Momism"?

**MEAD:** That is a left-over idea from World War II. In World War II we conscripted boys that would not have left home under American circumstances that early. A lot of them were quite miserable at leaving home, and when they were examined by the psychiatrist, he blamed "Mom" for everything that had happened to them, which was quite correct because "Mom" in that period was the most responsible person for bringing up boys. Fathers of that era didn't take very much interest in their children: the immigrant was too busy learning how to make a living, and the businessman also tended to leave all the choices about children's education to his wife.

Now this was a type of upbringing that is disappearing in this country today. With greater leisure, far more participation of fathers now prevails in the home.

**BRANDON:** Well, James Thurber said to me the other day that he still thinks of America as a matriarchy.

**MEAD:** America has never been a matriarchy; but America has been a society in which a great many of the things which, in Europe, were done by men are done by women —and vice versa. Women, for instance, don't play nearly

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as important a role in politics in this country as they do in England.

BRANDON: Europeans are often amazed how self-critical Americans are.

MEAD: Well, we've always had to be self-conscious, you see, because we were a culture built by adults. America was founded by people who came here with the standards and style of another society and the moment they landed they started to compare—compare favorably and compare unfavorably—this new country with the old country.

Some wise European once remarked that Americans have substituted anthropology for history. This continual publication of what the teen-agers are thinking, what the parents of teen-agers are thinking—this is what you call self-criticism on the one hand, and conformity on the other.

When Europeans think of the present period, they can always compare it with Agincourt or Runnymede or whatever . . . we haven't got this kind of background, and so we use comparisons among contemporary societies as our device to give ourselves some kind of depth. That's why Europeans wonder about the role of social sciences in this country, or the role of the psychiatrist. . . .

The role of the psychiatrist is primarily to give one a more disciplined awareness of what one is doing, and inevitably in this country it's important to be aware, whereas in Europe it's been more important to absorb a tradition and live it. The English, for example, find self-consciousness exceedingly unappealing, as likely to interfere with the smooth execution of a life-long position . . . if you haven't got a life-long position, which is the American case, then you need something different.

BRANDON: American children are taught that the reward of success is love. I wonder if that isn't a basic fallacy that comes to haunt Americans later in life.

MEAD: Americans are taught that you should make good, do well in school, do well in any defined situation—and bring this success to your parents. These were the offerings that children brought their parents, whereas in some other countries they bring docility, obedience, respect. In every culture of the world children bring something to their parents—and the parents give them love, reward, punishment, in return. Now in this country people have been taught not only that you will be loved if you succeed, which for a child is true, but also that if you are loved it's a sign you have succeeded. And so you get more of a dependence on other people's judgment, and on signs of love.

BRANDON: One of the most frequent phrases one hears used is whether somebody is well-adjusted or not. In Europe nobody cares. Is this purely the influence of psychiatry here?

MEAD: No, I think it's deeper than psychiatry. If you go back even before psychiatry, you had always an enormous emphasis in this country on learning how to get on in a group. People were always conscious that they had to learn not how to behave as a single individual, but how to get on with the others and do the things that were expected by the outside world. Psychiatry has picked this up.

BRANDON: Now that we have dissected some of the characteristics of American society, do you think they add up to a nation capable of world leadership?

MEAD: In a sense that's almost a totally academic question. If we were looking for world leadership and the rest of the world had several candidates, then they might ask the question and decide to give leadership to this country or that. We're more or less trapped in a situation where at least a certain portion of world leadership has got to fall to the United States. So I think a more useful question is to say: What kind of world leadership is the United States capable of?

BRANDON: Well, how would you define that?

MEAD: I think we're far more capable of informal world leadership than formal world leadership. General attitudes in this country toward government mean that we're far more able to be friendly, co-operative, and respectful of the rights and capacities of other countries in a private capacity than we are in a public capacity.

BRANDON: The Russians' recent accomplishments—in the technical field particularly—are obviously doing a lot to their ego. I was wondering where this might lead?

MEAD: The Russians have passed the period when they felt tremendously behind the West. In fact, they seem now to be reasonably assured of their superiority. This may lead to a period of "big-headedness" which may have all sorts of repercussions. It may mean a slackening of effort, which they will have to deal with, it might mean a great degree of recklessness. In traditional Russian literature the conceited man is a man without judgment. So the chastening effect of technological inferiority, when it's removed, might leave us with a Russia that was an even less comfortable sharer of the globe than the present Russia.

BRANDON: We have opened up this frightful Pandora's box of nuclear fission. Do you think man will be able to control it?

MEAD: I think there's very serious danger that we won't get through. The readings of history and anthropology in general give us no reason to believe that societies have built-in self-preservative systems. And therefore we can't say that man will be sensible enough not to destroy himself. He never has been sensible enough not to destroy himself, but he lived in small groups so that when he destroyed himself he didn't destroy everybody. So the necessity for new inventions for the conduct of the world cannot possibly be over-emphasized.

BRANDON: Are you thinking of disarmament or world government or—

MEAD: I don't think any of the plans proposed today will be

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enough. Diversion of peoples' energies into constructive directions that they really believe in and are interested in would certainly be one part of the picture. To move from fear to activity—that's the major function of trips to the moon at present. No matter how much people try to convert trips to the moon into military activities, they aren't very military; but they are a sort of activity that can focus the interest and the energy and the excitement of all peoples.

But we also need a good many specific, political inventions inside countries. It's a lack of political responsibility inside the countries that makes it possible for us to fear that leaders will precipitate war. This is our special task in this country; which we share with all the peoples of the world.

None of us know how to run cities. We don't know how to run large aggregations of people, we don't know how to make the average citizen in a country of this size take responsibility. We don't know it here and they don't know it in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union uses the Secret Police and every form of suppression; the methods that we use are not so much methods as lack of methods, in which we let delinquency and crime and alcoholism and political corruption build up and corrode our capacities to behave as a people.

BRANDON: Do you think it's more a question of government than of family responsibility?

MEAD: I don't think there's the slightest use of talking about family responsibility. How do you get to "The Family"? I think it's community and national responsibility to create the kind of conditions in which the family can fulfill its role. But to sit and lecture "The Family" and tell "The Family" what to do, which we hear all the time, is, you know, like going out and preaching to the fishes.

BRANDON: But aren't all these efforts to go to the moon not another form of escapism?

MEAD: I don't think it's escapism at all; it's an area in which people's imagination can be caught and in which they can have a chance to participate. Here, of course, I'm also speaking as an American: the idea of a new bit of space is exceedingly attractive to our people who have always been interested in what they could do with new space.

BRANDON: Is there much discussion among anthropologists these days of what might happen to their science if other species were discovered up in space?

MEAD: I think the discussion among anthropologists is more of the problem of space colonization and possible variations in human culture that we could artificially produce. As the world closes in and we have so much communication among ourselves our possibilities for variation are diminishing. So space offers new possibilities for variation in culture. And even without space, we may have to create new kinds of groups where specially gifted people are left alone for a while, left in ignorance of what is going on in other parts of the world.

BRANDON: You mean people would be left isolated on a planet?

MEAD: Or in space colonies. . . . The importance of space primarily at present is the effect it will have on the people on earth and their imagination. The mere notion that there may be other creatures on the planets and that we're going to look for them—it doesn't increase the probability of their being there, but it changes our attitude.

BRANDON: If you projected your mind, say, 500 or 1,000 years forward, what place do you think 20th-Century man would have in evolutionary history?

MEAD: Well, this depends so much—not on what we do, but what comes afterwards. I think we are in the most crucial period since, perhaps, the discovery of fire. And if one considers the original people who discovered fire and started moving north with it—if they had let that fire go out, man might have perished with them. The future of man as a developed species may have depended upon very few people and a very few accidents.

Now we again have hit a period where the future of the whole species depends upon what happens in this period. Whether people 500 years from now will realize that they owe their being here to the choices that we've made—whether they'll be able to judge whether we accidentally found the solutions or had become self-conscious enough to be able to see them, indicating that the age of social invention had actually begun—that's the sort of question I've asked.

If we go on now into the use of solar energy, to a period of "free power," this will be a change whose magnitude we are unable even to imagine. But I think we are failing to realize the resiliency and the possibilities of spontaneity and, moreover, responsibility in human beings. A great deal of the fear that you find in science fiction is based on a failure to realize how far man has come by his own efforts, and how much it is possible to improve any single facet of man's behavior by social invention. The great advances in the next 50 years, if we survive, are not going to be in technical inventions.

There will be no possibility of depending upon the education of the children to get us out of this mess—we've got to get out of this long before the children are grown up. We will learn, but at present we don't know what kind of competent help to give a country like Indonesia in its effort to knit itself into a new nationhood. We don't know how to work out communication between one group of people and another; we don't know how to govern the relationships between public opinion and public pronouncement. Now these are the things that we must learn very quickly. Therefore what we need now are human sciences—to educate people how to live in this new world and how to develop social inventions that will make it possible for us to survive.

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# SUMMER LITERARY REVIEW

## *Nabokov: The Art of the Perverse*

*by Conrad Brenner*

VLADIMIR NABOKOV is best known, if he is known at all, as one of those ghostly heroes on the out-of-print register, fondly perpetuated by a mute coterie. It is quite in order, this soft pedal. Nabokov has at least two things going against him in this life which later on will make him the foremost retread of the day. He is wildly and liquidly sophisticated, and he writes as well as any man alive.

With the publication of *Lolita* (1955) by a wayward English press in Paris, some fresh irony was laid on the idyll of Nabokov's literary reputation. Irony of a high order, very much up to the level of its victim. Nabokov, who is now an American citizen, could not get his masterpiece printed here. *Lolita* was eventually brought out by the Olympia Press, tucked away in one of those *Jour-lite* paper-bound series amid titles of dubious erotica.

Misunderstanding has come full circle as life imitates art. *Lolita* does not belong in trick luggage, but ideally, on every doorstep. If it is a "special" and "perverse" experience, if a taste for Nabokov is a special taste, there is nothing self-indulgent or peripheral about the book or its author. Nabokov is not special in the manner of a Henry James, a Virginia Woolf, or of any bad-boy writer of your acquaintance: his vision is neither provincial nor fragile, but entirely and transcendently private.

At his casual second-best, as in the recent *Pnin*, and indeed at all times, part of the impression Nabokov makes is that of the brilliant professional weaving his formula. For this reason, and his apparent feat of never laying an egg in-between creative waves, high praise should, I think, be rightly suspect. We live in an age which is largely content to assimilate the whole untidy house of its brackish avant-garde *and* its abundant professionalism (Scylla and Charybdis in the bookshops); loosely appraising, cataloging, leaving to posterity. Nabokov is both prodigiously offbeat and competent, but the more his art lends itself to one taxonomer or another, the more it transcends this quaint fury. The trouble is that the Nabokov formula (or the familiar props of a formula) keeps slipping away from the avid fingers; the conjuror has done it again. In pursuing this "formula," moreover, Nabokov is dedicated to the destruction of all other formulas meeting with his censure. Part of his mission consists in forcing the hand, not of the obviously fraudulent in literature, but of certain "serious" literary techniques and the attitudes which spawn them. To this end, he is a man of somewhat rigid but studied predispositions:

> The truth is that the play [*The Government Inspector*] is not a "comedy" at all, just as Shakespeare's dream-plays *Hamlet* or *Lear* cannot be called "tragedies." A bad play is more apt to be good comedy or good tragedy than the incredibly complicated creations of such men as Shakespeare or Gogol. . . . Gogol's play is poetry in action, and by poetry I mean the mysteries of the irrational as perceived through rational words. True poetry of that kind provokes— not laughter and not tears—but a radiant smile of perfect satisfaction, a purr of beatitude. . . . It [Gogol's style] gives one the sensation of something ludicrous and at the same time stellar, lurking constantly around the corner—and one likes to recall that the difference between the comic side of things, and their cosmic side, depends upon one sibilant. . . .

IN DESCRIBING Gogol's vision of St. Petersburg, Nabokov suggests his own circle of grotesquerie:

> . . . A reflection in a blurred mirror, an eerie medley of objects put to the wrong use, things going backwards the faster they moved forward, pale gray nights instead of ordinary black ones, and black days. . . . The door of a private house might open and a pig might come out—just like that. A man gets into a carriage, but he is not really a fat, sly, big-bottomed man—but. your Nose. . . .

Nabokov fuses with Gogol for a while, like Dostoevsky, and then goes off, utterly himself in still a third way. There are no stray pigs or disembodied noses; what was in Gogol a poetic mural becomes a tight shadow-play. The satire, as of all great satirists, behaves in the same way—always lapped, negating its own utility, destroying itself, stepping beyond.

Nabokov's humor, though, is indescribably original:

> Uncle alone in the house with the chil-

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dren said he'd dress up to amuse them. After a long wait, as he did not appear, they went down and saw a masked man putting the table silver into a bag. "Oh uncle," they cried in delight. "Yes, isn't my make-up good?" said Uncle, taking his mask off. Thus goes the Hegelian syllogism of humor. Thesis: Uncle made himself up as a burglar (a laugh for the children); antithesis: it *was* a burglar (a laugh for the reader); synthesis: it still was Uncle (fooling the reader). . . .

None of the dazzling trickery is practiced for its own sake, but always as the key to individual scenes or the seminal conflict. Humor becomes a swathe blighting all those falsely heavy approaches to life and literature, disclosing by the way its own irresistible angles. The strength of Nabakov lies in the check (and balance) of the sinister obbligato.

NABOKOV'S figures teeter on the edge of the void, take one grotesque step, and blunder their way to the bottom. They are neither Stavrogins, men without qualities, men of action fighting death with destiny, nor simple victims of assorted "forces." In their own place, they aspire and fall on the strings of a vision profoundly matured rather than obsessed. Still, there is no lack of demons; they are there, convulsed, jerking those strings.

Nabokov's pattern of limbo, search, disguise and discord is played in a variety of keys. The haunting short story, "That in Aleppo Once . . . ," puts his art to a very lyrical light. The narrator is a middle-aged Russian poet bolting France as the Germans come through. He marries hastily, and, it is hinted, a little desperately:

> It was love at first touch rather than at first sight, for I had met her several times before without experiencing any special emotions; but one night as I was seeing her home, something quaint she had said made me stoop with a laugh and lightly kiss her in the hair—and of course we all know of that blinding blast which is caused by merely picking up a small doll from the floor of a carefully abandoned house: the soldier involved hears nothing; for him it is but an ecstatic soundless and boundless expansion of what had been during his life a pinpoint of light in the dark center of his being.

The girl is young, and a little strange. In the south, on their way to Nice, they get separated, and a week later, after futile inquiries, he finds her there in a queue. She gives him first an innocent account of her movements, but later on amends it; she had lied to him, had stayed several nights in Montpellier with a man she met on the train. ("I did not want it at all. He sold hair lotions."). There follows a period of reciprocal torture as they fill out forms and wait for papers. One night she takes it all back: "You will think me crazy . . . but I didn't—I swear that I didn't. Perhaps I live several lives at once. Perhaps I wanted to test you. Perhaps this bench is a dream and we are in Saratov or on some star." He settles for the original story, morosely, and later they make it up.

On the day the visas and passage materialize, she disappears. He again makes inquiries, and discovers from one of the Russian families in Nice that she had been telling this story for weeks: she had fallen in love with a titled Frenchman, he had refused her a divorce and threatened to shoot both her and himself rather than sail to New York alone. It turns out that he has also hung in Paris a dog which they never had, and that she has gone to a chateau in Lozere with the mysterious young noble. The narrator gives it up and sails alone. On the fourth day out he is asked by a friend whether his wife might not be sick below, and he replies that he is alone. The man is taken aback: he had seen her in Marseilles, aimlessly walking along the embankment, two days before sailing. The narrator concludes:

> This is, I gather, the point of the whole story. . . . It was at that moment that I suddenly knew for certain that she had never existed at all. . . . Viewing the past graphically, I see our mangled romance engulfed in a deep valley of mist between the crags of two matter-of-fact mountains: life had been real before, life will be real from now on, I hope. Not tomorrow, though. Perhaps after tomorrow. . . . Yet the pity of it. . . . She keeps on walking to and fro where the brown nets are spread to dry on the hot stone slabs and the dappled light of the water plays on the side of a moored fishing

## *Pompes Funebres*

Now he is gone where worms can feed
Upon him, a discarded rind,
God's image, and a thinking reed,
In blindness blind

As any taxidermist's owl.
He who was tall and fleet and fair
Is now no more; the winds howl,
The stones stare.

Your double who went dressed in black
And beat the lions to their cage
Lies in blood; the whips crack,
The beasts rage.

Don your sombre herringbone
And clap your top hat to your head.
The carriage waits; the axles groan;
While prayers are said.

Rest your hot forehead on the plush;
And, hear, beyond the measured, sad
Funereal drums, above the hush,
The lions pad

Intently, through some sunless glade,
The body's blood-fed beasts in all
Their fury, while the lifted spade
Lets earth fall.

WILLIAM JAY SMITH

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> boat. Somewhere, somehow, I have made a fatal mistake. . . .

That fatal mistake, these grotesque combinations of last-ditch defiance, these incredible errors and impossible results are Nabokov's stock-in-trade, and the very perverse angles of his relentless close-up. The narrator of this comedy of errors is more fortunate than most of Nabokov's questers; for him there is a visible crag in the future after all. Nonetheless, the story is quietly characteristic; the deep (and growing) unreality of human communion is sparely etched, and the only element of the novels tangibly missing is the presence of the exploiter, the smooth third party.

PERVERSE. Of all the words one should employ to tag Nabokov's art, this now seems to me by far the most accurate. *Lolita* has been called perverse because of the sacred ground it so blackly disrupts, and hence embargoed. But no one ought to be surprised. Nabokov has put in a working lifetime toward the cultivation of fruitful perversity, and it is probably this which gives him his great distinction as a conjuror and sets him apart from anyone. For the most "perverse" novel you are ever likely to encounter, there is nothing, not even *Lolita,* to equal *The Real Life of Sebastian* ***Knight*** (still, I think, in print). This book is quite openly a literary trick, astounding in the sleek deceitful contours, but you will be much mistaken to dismiss it as an exercise in ambiguity. Nabokov does not usually trade on this kind of straight ambiguity, so to speak, but in *Sebastian Knight,* it is an essential part of what he is trying to get across. At this point, I can only genuflect in the meek hope that he *has* come across, that I have got it "right" (and incidentally, that I do not take away too much from some tardy reader's delight).

The clue is the word *Real* in the title. An expatriate Russian novelist, writing in English, dies an early death in relative obscurity—of an incurable heart disease, we learn later. His life, a more or less continental one, with England for a base, his *story,* his *secret,* is shrouded in hermitic mist. His brother, who has not seen him more than twice since their divided college years, undertakes to seek out everyone who knew Sebastian, with the purpose of writing a conscientious biography (thus finally to come to know his brother)—and this book is, in fact, *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight.* The narrator is vaguely the business representative of a Paris firm, and he regards the small body of work published by his brother as the stuff of genius. These books are described in some detail through *Sebastian Knight*; they strike us—and this is an immense tribute to the fine line of Nabokov's craft—as both intriguing and somewhat precious. Ambiguity exhibit A. Another book has been published dealing with the dead author, a sort of bastard biography and critique by a literary opportunist who had been Knight's secretary. This book took the view that Knight was second-rate and what is known as a symptomatic product of his times, led astray. The narrator of *The Real Life* wishes to squash this fraud, and to that end visits (or does not visit), questions (or never gets to question) the false biographer himself, an Oxford friend of Sebastian's, his docile English mistress, and several others. Coincidences and chance meetings occur along the way (the "way" being the prelude to a biography, the brother's search), as they always and centrally do in Nabokov, until the book ends as the narrator, in still further retrospect, hurries to the deathbed of Sebastian himself with the hope of snatching something vital from his last words, and takes away instead the memory of one of those colossally edifying mix-ups which Nabokov so lovingly prepares. *Sebastian Knight* ends with the brother musing that perhaps he was Sebastian, or that Sebastian was he, or that both of them were somebody unknown to either of them.

THESE are the bones, but what of the points? They are viny. As the novel progresses, we become aware that Sebastian is less and less "known"; at the conclusion we are further than ever from even imagining him, his soul, his destiny. Both the man and the work are to remain an inaccessible proposition. We seem to learn more about the narrator, his brother's shadow—indeed the book appears to be really *his* book. But this notion is dispelled by the deliberate ambiguity of his (and Nabokov's) reflections in the final pages. The balance is so fine you could scream. We learn things about both men, and about each subsidiary character, yet we come away with less than nothing. A literary trick, yes, but it is impossible to show how convincingly this trick has been bolstered by Nabokov's visionary flare for the assorted mishaps which parody human soul-searching and soul-vamping. Discredited forever are the idea of the definitive biography; the revelatory Jamesian literature which little by little discloses the kernel or "essence" of a character; the secret-self view of life which that, and more notorious literatures, uphold; the attitude and literature of the Quest, in general.

NABOKOV has been accused of writing masterpieces before, but *Lolita* is not that easy to brush off. For one thing, it is not bullet-proof like *Sebastian Knight*; it runs to excess and occasionally loses pitch (not necessarily a fault). Its prose is flamboyant, free, liberated; conceived in joy. It is a triangle—Nabokov's favorite scheme—to end all triangles, a work clearly foreshadowed in the body of his prose, and the high water mark of his career as *agent provocateur.* From the strategy of *Laughter in the Dark* (1938) to the inspiration of *Lolita* from minor to major key, the metamorphosis transpires.

*Laughter in the Dark* is a quietly brilliant novel. As to its themes, it does not really admit of this sort of approach; instead, what we get is almost purely a paradigm of one man's art, Nabokov's calling card. The first words announce his intention:

> Once upon a time there lived in Berlin, Germany, a man called Albinus. He was rich, respectable, happy; one day he abandoned his wife for the sake of a youthful mistress; he loved; was not loved; and his life ended in disaster. This is the whole of the story and we might have left it at that had there not been profit and pleasure in the telling; and although there is plenty of space on a gravestone to contain, bound to moss, the abridged version of a man's life, detail is always welcome.

In other words, a familiar and much-abused situation in literature will be taken up, and the author will show us how it ought to be done ("in the telling"), thereby pointing up for all time how it should not be done. (Before you can read Nabokov, you must put in a certain amount of spadework elsewhere.) Of course, the situation itself seems to have been invented solely for

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Nabokov's patent; from right to left: the innocent bourgeois with his furtive dreams, the sleek trashy siren of sixteen summers, the unscrupulous rival. One against one, then one against two, and so on to infinity—the literature of downfall. The fatal flaw, nemesis, the rush of wings? Nabokov isn't buying any.

*Laughter in the Dark* applies the kiss of death to these: tragic pomp; abstract fatalism; mysterious forces; grave-faced determinism, and that provincial psychology which goes about meticulously evolving doom—a meager substitute for the true psychology which knows what doom is like and takes it from there. The protagonist of *Laughter in the Dark* is no grim victim, but a supreme fool and bungler. He is guilty of quitting his own demesne to trespass on another, leaving his pasture for a cesspool he cannot and dare not even begin to survey. Like all figures in the entire literature of decay, he is his own best goose. At his ruin, he is so far from being an object of pity or tragedy or human slime as to be raised to the highest perch of mockery. Both he and the melodramatic fixtures which always attend these sorry binges, are fried in hideous laughter. If he and his melodrama exist—and they do—Nabokov's version may be the only one to take seriously.

THIS brings up to *Lolita* and shapes of a more ominous order. The changeover is so complete that we are now in a world which positively defies the existence of types in its foreground.

In *Lolita*, Albinus has become Humbert, dilettante, rarefier, grotesquely aware of his bondage. He has vaulted so headlong from a season in limbo as to be the inventor and high priest of "nymphetry." A nymphet is no longer one at 16, like Margot in *Laughter in the Dark*. She must be something along the lines of Dolores Haze (Lolita is Humbert's drooling secret alias), vulgar, pubescent, first possessed at the age of twelve. And as though this coupling were not sufficiently perverse, the adored rival, still cruel, still worldly, still adored, now wears an impossible mask: aging, bloated, impotent — a veteran *fumiste* of vice. It is an old company gone sour, turned incontinently upside-down; inverting the process Dostoevsky thought of as taking things to their extremes, and then a step further. In *Lolita*, we get a vision of fragile little girls who are not really fragile, over-literary perverts who lack a final core of obsession, jaded dabbling exploiters who lurk about as resident parties of the third part.

*Books by Vladimir Nabokov*

*Despair*
J. Long (London) (1937)

*Laughter in the Dark*
Bobbs-Merrill (1938)

*The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*
New Directions (1941)

*Nicolai Gogol*
New Directions (1944)

*Bend Sinister*
Holt (1947)

*Nine Stories*
New Directions (1947)

*Conclusive Evidence*, a memoir
Harper (1951)

*Pnin*
Doubleday (1957)

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*Lolita* will be published in August by Putnam

*Lolita* brings us profoundly, rudely up-to-date: the surest sign that we have to hand a great novel. The conscience behind it is supremely public, supremely "topical," and the art of it supremely lonely, special. Revealed once more is the terrain proper to high fiction, that most totally distilled of forums. What has been renewed is nothing less than what Malraux would call the colloquy of the masters. (This is no idle phrase, in any case). Nabokov again takes the strands of an amazing number of traditions, gives them a new dimension or raps their importunate knuckles, by turns. That ultimate offense of Russian, and some European fiction—the horror of demon rape—is played out in a strange vacuum. So is the theme of revenge (murder will out). A new and chilling note is given to the literature of tragic waste. An advance is made on the old quest for reality, and the modern escape from reality. (What do you do with a world where every reality is rehearsed, abstracted, weirdly performed?) The need for glamor is refined endlessly, and ends in perversion. The vicious ring of the misfits, compulsively gravitating to and destroying one another, finds expression in a new bathos. Finally, life in America (*Lolita* is also an *American* novel) is drawn as some mad game, or daisy chain, and the poison is shown to be eating at the roots.

Among the ideas up for straight parody are the pursuit of happiness, the ultimate pill of the case-history, Freudian short-cuts in general, *and* the reverend literature of pornography. All these strands are gathered up in the one inspired conception, fused, and beamed obliquely, in Nabokov's demonic laughter, the better to fix that once-removed quality of life which seems to be our birthright. What *shall* we do with the drunken sailor, the recalcitrant by-product, the uniquely masked, the violated who survive, the desperate clowns who go down in the search for a plausible *idée fixe?* What if we find, even in ourselves, the act dislodged from the passion, the act as some grotesque necessity, the mind as a neutral audience to the action, the action dissolving in a flow of analysis? For Lolita, the child, life is already the crazy game Humbert the pervert vainly seeks to out-maneuver.

Thus, the art of the perverse ultimately lashes everyone in its wake, and the highest farce tells the darkest tale. Yet who will publish it today, and who will put it on the syllabus tomorrow? alongside *Huckleberry Finn*, perhaps?

VLADIMIR Nabokov is an artist of the first rank, a writer in the great tradition. He will never win the Pulitzer Prize or the Nobel Prize, yet *Lolita* is probably the best fiction to come out of this country (so to speak) since Faulkner's burst in the thirties. He may be the most important writer now going in this country. He is already, God help him, a classic. He has written in Russian, French, German, and now wields an English that a native young writer would kill for. I am afraid that, in this respect, he puts Conrad in the shade. Where Conrad creaks, Nabokov dances. For the moment he writes for the happy few: not yet trussed up in the coils of idiot "discovery" by the breathless young, only mildly pooh-poohed by the doctoral old, left (as he would be in any circumstances) by the trenchermen to the unsure filters of posterity. So much the better. But it is one thing to be published, read by a handful, acclaimed posthumously, and something else to be virtually squelched.

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# *America and Christendom*

## *by Donald Meyer*

MARITAIN'S random reflections, based on informal talks at the University of Chicago, constitute "testimony," words flowing out of a kind of free love, uncompelled: "a statement of why I love America." In Maritain's case, it was, he says, love at first sight, like a similar love so many Americans have felt for France —the instantaneous perception of "a moral personality, a moral vocation."

*Reflections on America*, by Jacques Maritain (Scribner's; $3.50). *Pious and Secular America* (Scribner's; $3). *In God We Trust*, edited by Norman Cousins (Harper; $3.95).

More gradually, over the last twenty-five years, Maritain came to realize the "congeniality," the "affinity," between American conditions and "the concrete historical ideal suitable to a new Christian civilization" which he had devised earlier from strictly European perspectives and called *Humanisme intégral*. A classless society, a post-capitalist economy "personalist and community-minded at the same time," and a pluralist culture: "the obvious fact is that America is not a nation like others." Our very faults—a certain impatience with life, a certain fleetingness in the life of the individual, an excessive intellectual modesty, certain delusions about married happiness, etc. —are really functions of our virtues, and therefore susceptible to good advice. All in all, says Jacques Maritain, "we may believe that if a new Christian civilization, a new Christendom is ever to come about in human history, it is on American soil that it will find its starting point." A remarkable love. Can such words really be good for us?

Twenty-five years ago, as Maritain was taking his first sight, Reinhold Niebuhr was predicting the "almost inevitable" fate of the United States to follow "the logic of history" into tragedy. But now, in his latest book, a collection of nine journalistic essays, seven of them more or less directly aimed at our social scene, Niebuhr extends his recantation of recent years. Somehow, as a nation, we have done reasonably well. Domestic tragedy has been averted, and even our foreign affairs we conduct with "tolerable grace and wisdom."

The tone of Niebuhr's appreciation is not Maritain's. Always more concerned to criticize than to praise the wise and the good, who fare well in Maritain's reflections (although not clearly identified; they are evidently not Puritans), Niebuhr by no means intends to go soft. He is not quite sure who or what he wants to credit for our achievement. Somehow, at least in politics, piety and secularism have checked each other's vices without frustrating each other's virtues, but neither is responsible in and of itself. Niebuhr comes close to suggesting that no one deserves to be called responsible. "The national consciousness must have been informed by some hidden resources of common sense which have been withheld from both the wise and the simple." One might ask—is there anybody else, neither wise nor simple? Or do we here stand in the dazzle of providence, confronted by mystery?

THE paradoxical result of Niebuhr's approach to our history is that now, in the full admission of our tolerable achievements as a nation, politically, it would seem that culturally we are depleted. Pious and secular America is, really, in mid-20th Century, neither pious nor secular, by Niebuhr's account. Contemporary piety knows nothing of the "mysteries and meaning" conserved by classical Christian faith. As for secularism, "we have travelled that path of progress almost to its limit." Ironically, much of modern piety is, in fact, adapted precisely to conceal this end of secularism.

Thus, whereas with Maritain we find ourselves before a great moment of emergence, to fulfill and make articulate the long tendencies of our past, with Niebuhr we are once again submitted to the moment of dialectical drama, when the past, revealing its illusions as illusions, has ended, and not completion but conversion is called for. Is it Maritain—our lover more than our critic—who is right? It is fascinating in Maritain's book to find ourselves being urged to realize that we are not a capitalist society. The story of our economy is that of a Manichaean struggle "between the spirit of the people and the logic of the industrial system," and the spirit has been winning. An industrial system is being humanized. In this, Maritain is following Adolf Berle, Peter Drucker, David Lilienthal, Frederick Lewis Allen, rather than, say, Wright Mills, William Whyte, and David Riesman. Maritain would be likely to say that Mills, Whyte and Riesman simply prove his point. In their humanistic anxiety, they are evidence of the rigor of the spirit that defies—and defeats—the "logic" of the system.

Niebuhr, on the other hand, sees our economy as a realm where, unlike politics, the association of piety and secularism has been uncreative, each re-inforcing the other's vices, eventually congealing into a cult of mere comfort and efficiency with Norman Vincent Peale its presiding exhorter. Our chance for salvation depends upon recognition of spiritual poverty rather than of spiritual riches.

WHOEVER is right, it is sad that neo-orthodoxy should be left in the position of appearing never to argue its case except pragmatically as a rebound from the limits, the mysteries, the failures, the poverties of life. It can hardly generate vitality on that level: American life offers a myriad evasions of failure, and of course in any case there is a myriad of other consolations that work, probably better. It is not Niebuhr's fault. It is the fault of the Protestant churches, and of Niebuhr's neo-orthodox followers seizing upon his potentially revolutionary thought as merely a restoration of "religion" to competitive intellectual respectability. What American life lacks today, Niebuhr implies, in those essays where he is less preoccupied with irony and paradox, is tension. There is too little tension between our culture generally and the churches, too little tension between the culture and our schools, too little tension between our achieve-

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ments out of the past and our imagination for the future. We are, in short, over-democratized, without reliable means for learning a passion for excellence.

This points straight at the field, not of the nation or the culture, but of the individual, and it is revealing that Maritain, for all his love for our collective self, finds the self of the individual American fleeting, unstable, insecure, lonely, unsubstantial somehow, often incapable of being "close" to any other. Like Niebuhr, Maritain too is a man with an evangel, and it is permissible, I think, to suggest that neo-Thomism is no more adapted than neo-orthodoxy to the issues Maritain, like Niebuhr, senses in our unprecedented civilization. Both are "premature," in a sense. That is, both offer answers to problems of the spirit today before those problems have been thoroughly felt. Both locate the mystery and meaning of American culture in unique features of our sociological and psychological conditions, yet both presume to illuminate what sociology and psychology—not to mention poetry—have not yet illuminated, without asking whether some religious answers now may not inhibit cultural answers later.

This is to perpetuate religion in its merely conservative tradition, as bad science, bad psychology, bad poetry, rather than to revivify it as men's experience of themselves as creatures in process of self-creation. It is not an accident that neither neo-Thomism nor neo-orthodoxy has generated real evangelical power. Probably neither has caught as many men where the most liberating thinking of our day—analytical psychology—catches them. Neither has learned to derive its categories from the concrete life of the individual.

NORMAN COUSINS' book inspires some thoughts along this line. Cousins has collected most of the writing of eight of the founding fathers — Franklin, Washington, Jefferson, Madison, John and Sam Adams, Hamilton, Jay, and Paine—having anything to do with religion. The collection helps us realize perhaps a bit more decisively than we already knew, that many of our early leaders professed what was called Deism —although two of the eight, Sam Adams and John Jay, did not. This is straightforward enough, and yet the book is more puzzling than plain. Jefferson predicted that Unitarianism would become the national religion. It did not; it never threatened to; and the echo of his hope rings eerily.

Is Norman Cousins concerned, like Jefferson, to combat sectarian superstition and exclusion? Is he concerned, like Tom Paine, to combat atheism? What are the lessons in the religious ideas of these men? All of them—except for Sam Adams and Jay—were in motion *away* from the God of *their* fathers. But this, Cousins does not highlight. What we have, rather, is the perfectly accurate picture of men who, responsible for civic order, could think of religion only as it served civic virtue.

But this is precisely the approach that has contributed to the passive, merely reflexive character of religion in America today. In their diverse ways, both Maritain and Niebuhr testify to this. What they suggest we are struggling against is our civic success, whether that be admirable or merely tolerable. The individual is coerced by organized and public virtues.

MARITAIN, true to the Catholic obsession with order, simply looks forward to a new Christendom, where there shall be no tension between individual and society, and civic virtue and religious faith shall abide together in peace. But in Niebuhr, it ought to be clear that society exists, not to incarnate Christendom, but as the fullest realm for men's endeavor to create meaning—and mystery—for themselves, to create themselves. Niebuhr cannot, as he shows in his best essay, on Christians and Jews, claim America for "Christendom," if only because America has been home for many men who were and are not Christians, and owes much of its best to them. At the same time he could not say what John Adams said:

> I believe with Justin Martyr, that all good men are Christians, and I believe there have been, and are, good men in all nations, sincere and conscientious.

He could not say this because he has insisted — unlike Maritain — that being Christian is not being good. It is rather being honest, about oneself, and not hiding in the collective. Therefore Christianity need make no parochial claims to contain, in Christendom, a supreme model for culture.

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# *Europe's Dinner Pail*

## *by Percy Winner*

At the end of more than 500 pages Blair Bolles prefaces an impressive bibliography with the rather pretentious statement that "The Europe which this book has described is not discussed in any other book." The reason may be that *The Big Change in Europe,* which emerges from the book, is a mosaic of tooled fragments and oddments rather than structured substance. It contains a great deal of information (including much that is highly questionable or downright wrong) and little of the kind of knowledge in depth on which sound foreign policy might be based. The central thesis is that since 1953 "America-Europe" has made wonderful material progress, thanks largely to enthusiastic acceptance of the American gospel of productivity, while the America of the White House and the State Department has squandered power and prestige and discouraged the search for the "new idea" which is "the American essential in dealing with Europe." The criticism is orthodox but nonetheless quite credible neo-New Dealism, but the commendatory material about the European "renaissance" does not explain to the general reader how and why American foreign policy fails to take fully into consideration, adapt itself to, compromise with, hence effectively exploit particular situations abroad in order to serve the general national interest.

*The Big Change in Europe*, by Blair Bolles (Norton; $5.95).

It is true that the economy of the countries of the so-called Little or Christian Europe, and of Great Britain as well, has greatly improved in recent years, that material change has far outdistanced political change, and that one of the effects of the technological advances has been to bring to more Western Europeans more of the labor-saving, time-providing, amusement-giving devices that inevitably play a (not inevitably good) part in the development of the modern mechanical civilization, of which both the United States and Europe are parts. The Western European economy rode out the American depression of 1953-4 and has been relatively little affected by the current American depression of 1957-8.

As a matter of fact the boom which began in Europe in 1953 continues; during the first quarter of 1958, economic reports were generally excellent from Italy, West Germany, Belgium, Holland, Great Britain, Austria, and even France. And it does not seem true, as Mr. Bolles suggests, that America "won" *its* Europe through technology; on the contrary, technology won Europe through America. Moreover, despite Charles Beard, John Dewey and others including Karl Marx, European man—the man of Europe by any definition—is not, by a very long shot, economic man as such.

In common with such phrases as "the West" and "the Free World," Europe has become a rhetorical expression changing its size, shape and contour to accord with the user's peroration. Mr. Bolles' big change refers to only a half dozen countries, but his book ambitiously professes to be a comprehensive, extensive history of no fewer than 24 told mainly in terms of the leading personalities. Yet Charles de Gaulle's name is mentioned eight times, incidentally, in passing, as an adjective, never once in a revealing context. Poland is included among the countries, but neither Gomulka nor Wyszynski is mentioned a single time. Tito is treated even more summarily than de Gaulle, and Monnet who more than any other single European has been responsible for whatever change has taken place, is dismissed with a relative clause of ten words. The miracle of West German economic recovery is described in nearly 10 pages without any reference whatsoever to the relation between the long exemption from the need to pay for arms and armament and the capture of foreign markets from other countries which *were* paying for arms. Jean-Paul Sartre turns out to be a poet, and Sagan the maker of a generation (her real name given variously as Quoirez and Zuoirez). Missiles with atomic warheads are crowded out by washing machines and vacuum cleaners (would that it were so!). The Church in Spain is described without a single mention of *Opus Dei.*

Finding the keys to the kingdom of contentment exclusively in the new version of the full dinner pail, Mr. Bolles quite properly points out that the Western European countries have been acquiring a new mechanized, technological civilization; they have been growing richer; their population has grown larger, younger. But he neglects the values other than political: rather he dislikes or suspects any value that fails to change with economic change. In England:

> It makes the flesh creep when one does note the accentuated distinctions between a gentleman and others; and it also puzzles the beholder how these social attitudes outlast economic change. . . . England could be a most pleasant country for a stranger to live in if the masses did not accept so serenely the preposterous notion that they stand apart as a clear-cut group from their fellow countrymen.

In Spain:

> There is a similarity in Spanish excuses for the cruelty to the bulls and the cruelty to the people. . . . The Spaniard has a pose of dignity that might mean contentment. . . . But the dignity is his screen, like the laughter of Negroes in the slave quarters a hundred years ago.

In France:

> Jealousy is a parasite which many Frenchmen carry in their spirit. . . . How often the things that are good about France, the things that make it attractive, are bad for France. It is a temptation to think that if the price of speedier progress is to change those attractions, then progress is not worth it. This is an old-fashioned opinion unfair to the people of France. . . . Another curse of France is the Frenchman's fondness for the beautiful land.

Elsewhere:

> Italians have a streak of kindness that causes them suffering. . . . Greek Orthodox priests wear imposing beards and do their long hair up in back in Mrs. Katzenjammer knots. . . . The Turk has been called the "Texan of Europe" . . . [he] is attractive politically to the United States because he is a famous hater who nurses his dislikes.

Unfortunately, both Mr. Eisenhower and Mr. Dulles are probably too set in their misguided ways to take advantage, in changing American foreign policy, of such profundities.

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# *Sermons on Depravity*

## *by Irving Howe*

EVER SINCE Daniel Defoe started writing narratives about loose women, hordes of moralists have buzzed around the novel, denouncing its low and vicious tone. Such critics refuse —they do not care enough about literature—to see that the novelist who struggles with unsavory material and sometimes even succumbs to it, may yet be engaged in a moral quest of his own, perhaps more serious, because more problematic, than that of the writer who knows in advance both his road and destination.

*Man in Modern Fiction*, by Edmund Fuller (Random House; $3.50).

Not only do these critics have a cramped and frightened view of literature—they usually claim to fear that it will corrupt someone—but, more important, they have a view of morality that is also cramped and frightened. They think of morality as a *given*, a yardstick for ready-made judgment and a stick for liberal chastisement. They can be amusing when malicious, but are boring when merely sincere.

Mr. Edmund Fuller, who is sincere, deplores the moral state of the American novel. Writing as a defender of the "Judeo-Christian tradition," he finds a "dismaying number" of novelists with "emphatic things to say of a virulently destructive and anti-social character." They exalt violence, debase sex to casual encounters, sentimentalize criminals, and sneer at ordinary middle-class decency.

After so comprehensive an indictment it comes as somewhat of an anti-climax that the "dismaying number" of anti-social novelists consist of third- and fourth-raters, and that the whole philippic depends upon finding deep significance in the work of James Jones, Paul Bowles, Philip Wylie and Tennessee Williams. The only novelist of any stature whom Mr. Fuller attacks at length is Norman Mailer, and there his case collapses, first because he fails to consider the political dimension of Mailer's work, which is surely of serious moral intent and second, because he fails to grasp the impulse toward psychic and moral self-renewal which, even if mistakenly, lies behind Mailer's semi-Lawrentian writings about sex. Other serious writers of our day — novelists, say, like Bernard Malamud, Ralph Ellison, Crawford Power and Saul Bellow—are barely mentioned by Mr. Fuller, since to have considered them would have meant to complicate his argument intolerably.

Even with his easy targets, Mr. Fuller does not always shoot straight. It is fair enough to clobber James Jones for his silly notions about "whores making the best wives," but if Jones is to be the main object of attack, then some thought should be given to the powerful stockade scenes in *From Here to Eternity*, which display a considerable moral feeling for the sufferings of bottom dogs. In any case, drawing up an indictment larger than *Life's* while focussing upon so limited a selection of writers, is much too easy a procedure. If you limit yourself to Jones, you can "prove" American literature is illiterate; if you limit yourself to Tennessee Williams, you can "prove" the human race is in danger of failing to perpetuate itself.

Nor does Mr. Fuller display enough intellectual curiosity, or Christian charity, to consider at length: why this moral uncertainty and disorder? why have his victims fallen? Is it merely due to the poison of secularism? is there something in our experience that might explain and thereby make us a bit more sympathetic to the unfocussed revolt, the rebellion of desperate incomprehension, which characterizes some of the writers he discusses?

MR. FULLER'S moral views are finally more disturbing than his literary opinions. The latter are a personal affliction, but the former are typical of the fuzziness of mind and coldness of heart that accompany so much of the new religiosity.

Mr. Fuller proclaims himself a defender of the "Judeo-Christian tradition," which he counterposes to the naturalistic determinism eating away at the soul of the modern novel. A word of protest might be in order against this banquet phrase, "the Judeo-Christian tradition," and the glib assimilations implied by the hyphen, for it is conceivable that an intelligent Jew, whether a believer or a skeptic, might not want any part of Christianity's long-standing troubles in regard to sex, theological heresy and church organization. In any case, what is this tradition that modern writers are supposed to be abandoning? It is simply that

> . . . Man is not portrayed by *either* good *or* bad, but as *both* good *and* bad He inhabits an orderly universe. His fundamental laws are commands of his Creator . . . Man . . . is individual, responsible, guilty, redeemable.

Yet, apart from the reference to the Creator, these are sentiments to which many secularists, and many secular novelists, could easily subscribe, though surely with the knowledge that such phrases barely begin to touch upon the dynamic complexities either of moral experience or of embodying them in works of the imagination. Mr. Fuller regards literature primarily as a place in which to search for the proper "view of man," and that is why he is able to find so little else.

Even his version of Christianity is much too impoverished and simple-

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minded to create the intellectual tension that might yield him profit as a critic. "My own experience" of Original Sin, he writes, "has brought me immense relief by helping me to understand why I'm persistently cussed and perverse when I don't intend to be." This is indeed enviable, but one waits in vain for Mr. Fuller to say *what* this understanding consists of.

AT CERTAIN crucial moments Mr. Fuller's Christianity wears thin, and what emerges beneath it is not very reassuring—it seldom is with moralists. Writing about Tennessee Williams, Mr. Fuller remarks that he "leads us through the quagmires not merely of homosexuality, but of masochism, sadism, and cannibalism." Now a civilized person can have several views of homosexuality: he may regard it as a psychic illness open to eventual therapy, as a fact of natural existence parallel to the fact of heterosexuality, or as a radical affliction visited upon certain unfortunate people. But it is hard to see how a civilized person, let alone one committed to the traditional Christian virtue of *caritas,* can place homosexuality in a category (or "quagmire") akin to cannibalism. And it is hard to see how a man who writes in this spirit can lay serious claim to upbraiding our novelists for their moral derelictions.

Some years ago Wallace Stevens wrote a poem called "A High-Toned Old Christian Woman" which provides the definitive comment on books like Mr. Fuller's. The poem begins with the line, "Poetry is the supreme fiction, madam" and ends with a bit of marvellous hijinks that yet contains a deeply serious reflection upon the relation between art and morality:

> Allow,
> Therefore, that in the planetary scene
> Your disaffected flagellants, well-stuffed,
> Smacking their muzzy bellies in parade,
> Proud of such novelties of the sublime,
> Such tink and tank and tunk-a-tunk-tunk,
> May, merely may, madame, whip from themselves
> A jovial hullabaloo among the spheres.
> This will make widows wince. But fictive things
> Wink as they will. Wink most when widows wince.

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# *Observations of an Alien*

## *by Reed Whittemore*

WHEN Howard Nemerov was younger it was not evident to his readers or perhaps to Nemerov himself that he would turn into a nature poet. The visible models, from Wordsworth to Frost, seemed as foreign to his intellectual and verbal manners as they could well seem. Indeed it was as a smart (and his elders thought too smart) rebel against the clean outdoor simplicities or the charting of emanations from bushes that he got into verse at all; and his early spirit of unbushiness did not distinguish him much from his contemporaries at Harvard, which he attended, or Yale, which he frequented.

*Mirrors and Windows: Poems,* by Howard Nemerov (Chicago; $3.50).

Then came what looked like a change of heart, a change evident in his last volume, *The Salt Garden*. The change was indicated by a new interest in the difficult but relatively straightforward art of description. Against his apparent earlier inclinations he deliberately cultivated the naturalist's as distinguished from the metaphysicist's eye; and if visited in Vermont he could be found out on long walks naming things. Before the switch he could, to be sure, have been found out on the same walks, but not for the same reason: instead of naming and characterizing the birds about him he would endow them with the trappings of paradox and analogy. After the switch he continued to be interested in paradox and analogy, but he was more grateful for the birds he started with than he had been.

Of natural analogies the new volume is full. Nature is, as I think Milton Babbitt pointed out, frequently merely a projection of self; the poet finds what he wants to find in nature, and what he wants to find is more than apt to be what he is or would like to be. If he is a romantic he is probably not conscious of the analogues he is drawing (it satisfies my ego to think of all romantics as unconscious). If he is a Nemerov he is hyperconscious of them. But in either event he does establish a relationship; the outer and the inner landscapes tend to merge, to make an order in which a common body of law and truth prevails. All the medieval analogues did this openly and rigorously; their modern counterparts are mostly sneaky and haphazard. But in the old and the new alike human nature seeks out its extra-human natural models or equivalents.

What does Mr. Nemerov find in nature with which he may personally be compared?—birds, mountains, isolated trees, statues and more birds. Birds especially. And what is the relationship of these mostly birds to their environment? They are the ones who are out of it all, working out their lone destinies without reference to or even despite their surroundings. The surroundings are bare beach, bare rock, bare sky; or if they are not simply barren they are democratic, low, dirty, menacing, humdrum. And what do the mostly birds *do* in these surroundings Well, the birds in the town dump make the most of a bad situation:

> . . . But I will add
> That wild birds, drawn to the carrion and flies.
> Assemble in some numbers here, their wings
> Shining with light, their flight enviably free,
> Their music marvelous, though sad, though strange.

The tree in a world of change stands firm. The sandpipers on the beach make a go of escaping the ravenous sea ("I have never seen one caught"), and of feeding themselves as they do so; this is their skill, and it is a great skill, the source of their beauty:

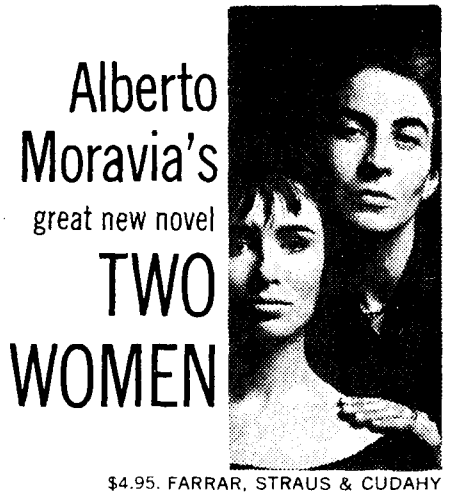
> . . . When suddenly they turn
> In unison, all their bellies shine
> Like mirrors flashing white with signals
> I cannot read, but I wish them well.

As for mountains, they make a business of calmly "rising above the storm / To the region of serenity and splendor." In summary, these natural isolationists or independents practise their independence successfully and become, thus, models for their human equivalents, poets particularly.

Nemerov's various birds have a good deal in common with Yeats's swans, Keats's nightingales and a horde of other by now thoroughly conventionalized independents; and because they do one may reasonably ask to what extent their presence in Nemerov's work may be attributed to a view of things that Nemerov personally, privately, in the regions of his "natural" heart espouses. Are his poems of the heart or the will? Fortunately Nemerov himself questions his identifications, his sallyings forth into what he "is." When he does so he takes to discussing his art and its validity; he takes to worrying about whether he as a poet is alienated from himself as himself, whoever he may be. Thus a good many poems turn on themselves. They consider the poet writing about what he is writing about, and so forth.

SEVERAL years ago, in a short, satiric, prose piece about how to write a novel, Nemerov was similarly taken by the problem of the creator's identity. In this he describes himself seated at his monstrous machine (a typewriter, and also, if you will, a symbol of artifice) with his cigaret and coffee, preparing to open up his heart. All these appurtenances for the great unveiling loom larger than the unveiling itself, and the longer he sits before the machine and smokes the cigarets and drinks the coffee, the less clear does it seem to him that there is anything to unveil except what the machine and the cigaret and the coffee may themselves discover. He appears, thus, at least to himself, as something of an alien to his own authorial image.

These themes of alienation and identity are to our time what love and the ravages of time were to Shakespeare's; that is, they are subjects one writes poems about if one writes poems; they are the matter with which one begins,



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daily, over and over again, much as the housewife begins with the cooking of eggs and bacon. For there is nothing that the modern poet has to confront more regularly than his loneliness and displacement. Accordingly these confrontations soon come to have a ritualistic air about them. The poet goes out in the morning and looks for the occasion, the object, the scene in which he may discover his predicament, then pay homage to it. Now in a less thoughtful poet than Nemerov the homage would, and frequently does, take the form of a lament. In Nemerov on the other hand the rhetorical or lyric side of the business is of less consequence than the metaphysical side. The new book has two or three poems in it that could be called chants, but they are neither representative nor, I think especially distinguished. The best poems (with one or two exceptions) are more analytical than lyrical. This is not to say that they are not, or should not be, poems, but that, as poems, they are dominantly investigations rather than assertions. Sometimes, in fact, their assertions are their weaknesses; the *declaration* that

. . . We sublimate—sublime!—all tidal waves,
Tornadoes, tremblors of the earth, for good
And all, finding the separateness that saves
Garden and city from the wilderness
Where lust and wisdom tremble to undress:—
So may we die before both Fall and Flood

rings less true to my middle ear than the *observation* that

. . . each man
thought bitterly about primitive simplicity
and decadence, and how he had been ruined
by civilization and forced by circumstances
to drink and smoke and sit up all night
inspecting those perfectly arbitrary cards
until he was broken-winded as a trout on a rock
and had no use for the doctrines of Jean Jacques
Rousseau, and could no longer afford
a savagery whether noble or not; some
would never batter that battered copy of Walden
again.

In the former the poet is showing his hand, or at least saying that he is. In the latter he is doing nothing of the kind, and his detachment (if you will, his alienation) from "each man" seems to me to be perfectly suited to his poetic psyche or whatever. What the former passage lacks, to put it bluntly, is irony, the essential ingredient of the alien's make-up.

And yet irony is, by itself, easy—and the latter passage has a good deal more than irony. It is from *A Day on the Big Branch*, an instructive and persuasive example of the later Nemerov being *seriously* ironic—detached from and yet sympathetic to the object of irony, in this case a group of ill-at-ease Rousseauists. In his earlier days Nemerov was frequently merely detached; the world was something to ridicule; his poetic ritual took the form of a (dignified) tongue lashing. Now he is mellower, humbler, wiser—like one of Shakespeare's good dukes, though without a country to govern. This suggests to me, perhaps wrongly, that he is, in his own fashion, working his way out of the alienist's cave. I do not mean by this that his next volume will be devoid of irony, alienation, and all that, but that his development seems to involve coming to terms with, living with, even making a good thing of alienation rather than sitting back and bemoaning it, as do most of his contemporaries.

*Mirrors and Windows* is not the work of a "younger poet." Nemerov has thoroughly established himself in it as a poet of the long poem, the poem that is not an assertion of a simple lyric position but a dialogue, a leisurely confabulation, a weekend excursion in verse to the mountains of self. Such a poem may suffer—as all long poems are apt to suffer—simply from being mature, considerate, etc.; and I think it is not impossible that Nemerov is working up to something terribly long and dull. But that time is not yet. And if he can find in verse, as in his novels, narrative, dramatic excuses for even more extended meditations than the present ones, then there would seem to be no limit to what he can successfully pull off. The verse comes easy to him. The matter is there. And he is apparently a very unhappy man when he is not writing.

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## Notes on Contributors

CONRAD BRENNER is a young American critic, just out of the army. This is his first piece in *The New Republic*, and one of his first in print.

WILLIAM JAY SMITH has just published a book of his selected poems.

DONALD MEYER is on the history faculty of the University of California.

IRVING HOWE, a contributing editor of this journal, is the co-author (with Louis A. Coser) of *The American Communist Party: A Critical History*, published this month.

REED WHITTEMORE, who teaches at Carleton College, is the author of *An American Takes a Walk* and other other poems.

PERCY WINNER was, for many years, this journal's European correspondent.

R. W. FLINT has for many years been a regular contributor to literary journals here and abroad.

PAULA SNELLING is a native of Georgia and the author of numerous articles on race relations in the South.

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# ". . . Ere I Forget Thee, Oh Princeton!"

## by R. W. Flint

THIS is a dialectical novel of ideas in the great tradition of Adams' *Democracy*, Howells' *A Traveller from Altruria*, Santayana's *The Last Puritan*, and Trilling's *The Middle of the Journey*. If it hasn't quite the stature of any of these, the times being what they are and Mr. Buechner still a young man, it is still a readable, upstanding and ambitious member of the school. Mr.

*The Return of Ansel Gibbs*, by Frederick Buechner (Knopf; $3.75).

Buechner gained a somewhat unfair reputation for "Jamesian" preciosity in 1950 with *A Long Day's Dying* which he is now, and successfully on the whole, trying to shake off. As a job of intellectual and emotional plotting, in which events are arranged to force the characters to reveal themselves as candidly and concisely as they know how, it is very well done.

Mr. Buechner once again locates us in the mainstream between Wall Street and the East sixties, with climactic sidetrips to Washington, Harlem and big-time TV. But the real axis of the novel is that which ran, and may still run, between Stevensonian liberalism and a tragic (or "pessimistic") view of life derived from, or resembling, the Niebuhrian analysis of history and morals. Lest the reader blanch at the prospective thinness of this as material for fiction, I immediately add that Mr. Buechner has been faithful to his original and most obsessive theme; *let my hand forget its cunning, or ere I forget thee, O Princeton!* and the novel is the richer for it, more substantial than his previous two novels because he can now set the Scott Fitzgerald legend and spirit against a much larger and darker world.

Mr. Buechner can surround his Ansel Gibbs — a man enormously like Adlai Stevenson—with a Niebuhrian missionary, a rich Auntie Mame of a spinster dilletante, a Louis Howe of a *fidus Achates* and a young sprig of a shrewdly conforming Fitzgerald-like genius, because such a coalition did, in fact, coalesce. Buechner has studied under Niebuhr and knows his Niebuhrism. More than that, he believes and disbelieves it in the right proportion to bring it alive in a novel, to measure it dramatically against its own principles. For better or worse, certainly for the better in the well-heeled terrain of this novel, Niebuhrian guilt is held in a strong solution of well-loved success. We are still in the familiar Buechner atmosphere of rather chic good living, good eating and genteelly tough-minded conversation in which a whore is a "bawd" in mixed company, where "valor" appears as "valiance," and one young lover addresses the other as "Blessed." But a novel of ideas as well-conceived can survive such things.

ANSEL GIBBS is a silver-spooned, Europeanized, eloquent, middle-aged, bald, courageous, high-principled lawyer and reluctant public servant. Like someone we know (and love), he is volatile and periodically remote, witty, impatient, somewhat irresponsible (by ward-heeling standards) and highly indispensable. In the liberal watchwords of '52 and '56 he is "the best we have." Here indeed is the buzzing, straining, desperate warmth of the first Stevenson campaign, its crusading uncertainties. Gibbs is returning from a two-year period of meditative funk on his Montana ranch to accept a post offered him by "the President" (unspecified). Meanwhile his lovely motherless daughter has fallen in love with Robin Tripp, a TV "interviewer," the son of a close former friend of Gibbs' who shot himself in the twenties soon after being fired for incompetence by Gibbs from a minor job in Gibbs' firm. We see that Robin has a powerful motive for revenge on Gibbs and does indeed lure him on to his TV program and allow him to take an unmerciful grilling from a Midwestern senator whose original I need not specify. *Is* this revenge or isn't it? Does Gibbs' heroic candor, or merely public indifference, save him? Is the ham-handed Senator Farwell a little bit right in finding Gibbs too cold and detached for public service?

This is neither a great political novel nor the best case that might be made for contemporary liberalism. But it ought to be read. We can use any light on this era we can get, especially if it is accompanied by so much ingenious invention.


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# *The Old, Sad Story*

## *by Paula Snelling*

THE SUBJECT Mr. Redding chose is of first importance. His book is not. This is due to no lack of literary skill or erudition on the author's part, but to his unwillingness to engage himself here on a deeply creative or philosophic level. He contents himself with telling an old, sad story on much the terms it has been told a score of times in the past three decades. Those who listened before will not be brought to clearer understanding of why these things happened as they did, or how change can now be brought about.

*The Lonesome Road:* The Story of the Negro's Part in America, by Saunders Redding (Doubleday; $5.75).

For Negroes have grappled with more implacable lions and dragons, wandered through more intricate labyrinths than is required of most mortals; and in their heroic encounter have tapped sources of inner power almost lost to Western man in his existential despair. And yet, their dialogue with their world is still muted.

While new readers will find many things they need to know told movingly here, there are three respects in which the book fails to meet their needs: Too little space is given to recent developments. A clearer picture of the complexities of personalities and events of the last two decades would have placed the book and reader more nearly in the mainstream. And not enough emphasis is put upon the enrichment artists have brought to our culture and the extent to which they have altered the climate of opinion. Marian Anderson, for one, is not even mentioned; and only a few lines go to James Weldon Johnson whose words and acts and personality were important in the early bridging of the chasm between the whites and the blacks.

But the contribution Mr. Redding neglects most (and this, I think, reveals an unverbalized bias) is that of Negro leaders who have kept their home base in the South and sought ways of communicating with white Southerners without relinquishing personal dignity or the aspirations of their race. He speaks of Booker T. Washington frequently enough to make clear that he does not look with favor upon his philosophy or the compromises he made; nor upon the defects in his character as exemplified in certain dealings with other Negroes. He gives far too much space to Isaiah Montgomery and the experiences which led him to found the Negro municipality of Mound Bayou and rule it despotically. But these are the only Southern Negroes whom he discusses at any length. There is only passing reference to Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune, who found her own ways (unpalatable though they are to the younger generations of Negroes) of attaining honorable goals for her people. It is more difficult to see an excuse for the failure to mention Dr. Charles Johnson. And yet, here is a man whose scholarship and status as social scientist were of the first order; and whose achievements in bringing about mutual respect between the races and uniting them in efforts for the common good were certainly important factors in the sequence of events that led to the Supreme Court decision of 1954. Martin Luther King's name does not appear in these pages. There is obviously a blind spot here.

IT IS my personal belief that the Negro's future in America cannot be worked out independently of the South and its white and colored people. The story of the Negro's part in America omits its very core when it fails to tell about those gifted, sensitive, informed Negroes who have devoted their lives and talents to keeping the lines of communication open between the races and keeping them open on many levels, conscious and unconscious. For it is in this region that victory or stalemate will be determined.

There is a moral grandeur in the tenacity with which many southern Negroes have held and are holding on to the enduring human virtues of non-violence, compassion and magnanimity. And they are traveling a road lonelier by far than it need be.

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# A Communication

*(Continued from page 3)*

been fashionable in recent decades among literary people. But several clues —for example, Mr. Shapiro failed to mention Original Sin or to advocate, explicitly, a return to the delicious ignorance of the Middle Ages—ultimately led me to the almost incredible opinion that the article was intended seriously.

Let us examine a few of Mr. Shapiro's statements and suggestions so that we may admire the keen weapons with which the humanities are being defended:

1) Science is the enemy of poetry; the "useful sciences" are the enemies of "the humanities and the arts."

2) The Russian government is "scientific"; so was the Nazi government. Therefore these governments got rid of literature and the arts. The Nazis, on account of "the provincialism of the scientific mind" also "uprooted [certain parts of] the theoretical sciences."

3) America is afflicted with "scientific education," so-called because it is run by "quasi-scientific—educationalists with their punch cards and psychological batteries [who] have turned American education into just another machine," and because it educates students only in science, not in the humanities. This system of education is part of the despicable "American way of life," *i.e.*, "the material life, the worship of the scientific mentality, and the belief that Americans are the best people on earth."

4) It is impossible to lecture in foreign countries on American poetry without making America look bad, because the best modern American (and British) poets (and American novelists) are fiercely antagonistic to the American way of life or something like it; indeed, they have no other common opinion.

5) Many (?) scientists all over the world "sold out to Russia" because "Russia is a scientist's paradise." Scientists, nuclear scientists in particular, are moral idiots who live "in a world beyond human values" and are "incapable of making even the simplest intellectual or moral decision." . . .

6) Therefore the simple-minded masses should resume their ancient custom of accepting the moral judgments of men of "breeding," men with literary training, and (presumably) clergymen. Furthermore, scientists must be kept out of positions of leadership in government and education unless they are "[men] of the humanities"; indeed, because they "must professionally abrogate [their] human responsibilities," they should not be allowed to teach at all.

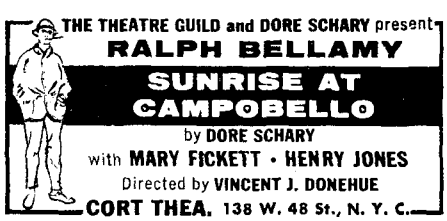
7) Worst of all are the social sciences, most of which are not sciences at all; one knows that economics is not a science because it is ridiculed in the comic strips, and one knows that sociology is not a science because a sentence in one of David Riesman's books displeases Mr. Shapiro.

It is hard to know where to begin with this mish-mash. One source of confusion, in this as in nearly every attack on "science" by the Annointed, is the ambiguity of Mr. Shapiro's use of the words "science," "scientist," "scientific" and even "humanities." I am at a loss to discover what Mr. Shapiro means by the "scientific mentality" that Americans worship . . . or what subjects, "scientific" or not, he considers to be adequately taught in American public schools—I do not know of any, except possibly football and "social living." Surely he does not mean the natural sciences: physics, chemistry, biology, or mathematics (which some people classify as a natural science). Popular ignorance of these subjects is colossal (being, perhaps, greatest among professors of literature), and, although ignorance often does seem sufficient ground for worship, the American distrust of "eggheads" has thrown all the pure sciences into disrepute. Mr. Shapiro's remark about scientists' desire to conquer the cosmos suggests that he is criticizing technology instead of science. His fondness for decayed teeth and his disapproval of space travel support this interpretation, although, on the other hand, he is thankful for plastic kidneys.

If, indeed, he is attacking the technologies that have grown out of the natural sciences and are growing out of the social sciences, he should say so; he should say how we can in the future avoid the curse of good health and material welfare—is it through cutting off the supply of engineers and doctors by ousting all scientists from teaching jobs? —and, above all, he should make clearer the relevance of "objectivity" to the problem—is he complaining because the engineers are too objective, or because they are not objective enough and therefore unduly influence public opinion?

Mr. Shapiro's charge of moral idiocy, brought against the nuclear scientists (which ones, and how many?) who "passed on their knowledge to Russia" because they wanted to keep peace, is simply outrageous. Is it moral idiocy to desire peace? Or is Mr. Shapiro hinting at the old bromide that the end does not justify the means (denied in practice by nearly all men in all times, including popes and poets, and by all societies that have punished crime)? It seems to me that anyone, scientist or literary critic, who gave help to the Russians in the hope of promoting peace, would be displaying, not immorality, but ignorance of facts or insufficient objectivity. . . .

One gets the impression that Mr. Shapiro disapproves of the social sciences, but his reasons are obscure. He does claim that the social sci-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ences, except possibly psychology, are not really sciences, but one would think this would be to their credit. His disapproval of the rhetoric of social scientists (which disapproval I share, incidentally) is irrelevant to the question of whether their findings are true. Perhaps Mr. Shapiro is afraid that they are true. Perhaps he thinks the results of social science are true but either trivial or more readily obtainable by non-scientific methods (*e.g.*, crystal gazing or divine revelation); perhaps he thinks they are false. Possibly he has in mind some claptrap about "the human spirit." I wish he would say!

He does make it clear that many of the leading modern writers in America and Great Britain have been bitterly critical of some aspects of American life. (Again, I agree with some of their criticisms, especially their esthetic criticisms —poets are not conspicuously competent to make moral judgments. Most of all I decry the American love of conformity —not noticeably a trait of scientists.) It is unfortunate that Mr. Shapiro, while lecturing in India, did not think of pointing out that not only are these men's opinions tolerated in America, not only are they not persecuted for their beliefs (except perhaps for Williams), but most of them could live in much greater affluence (even as professors) here than anywhere else. Perhaps it would have been beside the point for him to mention American architects, American orchestras, chamber music groups, pianists, composers, and amateur musicians, amateur actors, and amateur painters and sculptors.

UNQUESTIONABLY there is value in the study of literature. Not only can literature (and all art) add tremendously to one's enjoyment of life; it can enhance one's sensitivity to esthetic values, and narrative and dramatic literature can also call one's attention to moral and ethical subtleties that one might otherwise overlook. But it is at least debatable whether poetry is an appropriate vehicle of social criticism. Milton evidently thought it was not; Shakespeare occasionally marred his plays with propaganda favorable to current national policies—perhaps he was afraid to make adverse criticisms. Thomas Hood is an outstanding example of a poet who did use his verse for social criticism; Pope is another; and Wordsworth's poetry is usually at its worst when it is being directed at social problems. Although I do not agree that such men as Faulkner and Eliot are primarily engaged in social protest, conceivably even Eliot might have been a better poet had he been able to avoid such subjects as Apeneck Sweeney and Bleistein with a Baedeker. Poetry seems to suffer to the extent that it becomes didactic.

Be that as it may, there is absolutely no justification of Mr. Shapiro's desire to have society refer its moral problems to poets and others trained in literature. Whom would he choose, for example, from the galaxy of modern poets he mentions, who have no opinions in common except detestation of modern industrial society? Would he have us obey and emulate Pound? Eliot? Masters? Or, if he believes that these men have been corrupted by the cancer of industrialism, whom would he select from other times or other literatures? Chekov? Hardy? Browning? Swinburne? Baudelaire? Byron? Shelley? de Sade? Montaigne? Marlowe? Does he really consider these men better arbiters of morals than Einstein, Darwin, and Ricardo? If people want moral advice, let them seek it from wise and good men, whether poets, priests, psychologists, or physicists. Let them not assume that mere familiarity with literature (or theology) makes men wiser and better than their fellows. If they are wise, their study of literature has enriched their wisdom, but no one can be very wise who is ignorant of what science has learned about the universe.

Let artists beware of the assumption that, by mysteriously tuning their viscera to the cosmic frequency, they can discover Great Truths about humanity that are forever inaccessible to the methods of science. Let them criticize the social sciences intelligently, or not at all. If they think that social scientists are repeating the error of literary men in claiming special wisdom in the making of moral judgments—I think many of them are — let them say so, without thinking that they are thus refuting the factual results of social science. Let them take to heart the example of religion, which has for four centuries been retreating from positions that it never should have occupied, and is now reduced, wherever people are well educated, to making no testable assertions at all.

THE DECLINE of the humanities in America is indeed a tragedy. I suggest that it has come about largely because the humanities have been defended on the wrong ground by the wrong weapons, with the result that the most intelligent students have seen the phoniness of the defense and have betaken themselves to the sciences. Science is not the enemy of the humanities; they are their own enemy. It is too bad that scientists are not better versed in the humanities; it is far worse that men of literature are so arrogantly and abysmally ignorant of science. Not only do their public utterances add to the popular misunderstanding of science, but they have cut themselves off from the most significant and characteristic intellectual development of Western civilization; they are marooned and ignored, and in their misery they write nonsense.

INGRAM BLOCH
*Professor of Physics*
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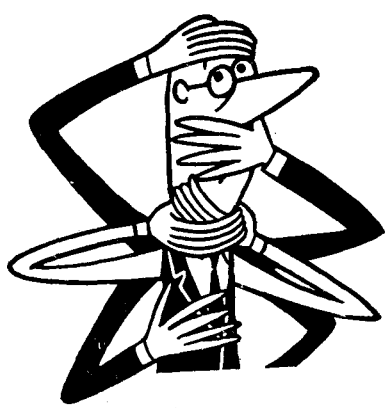

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